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This document is an abridged version of a longer study of the New York City school system which has been published under the title "110 Livingston Street" (see UD 007 624). Discussed here are New York City's struggle over school desegregation, the Board of Education and its top decision makers, and the demographic and housing patterns in the city. Also included are chapters on the neighborhood school issue, civil rights organizations, the "moderates," and the relationship between the Board and the city government. (NH)

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The Center for Urban Education

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INTRODUCTION

In 1965, the Center for Urban Education funded a study of the political obstacles to desegregation of the schools in the City of New York. It was our belief that the issue of school desegregation would ultimately be resolved only through decision-making processes extending beyond professional educators into communities and political bases. Because the size of the school system in New York City introduces complexities into tracking the progress of change and innovation, we felt that such a study would offer illuminating material for other big cities, and data for the time when the issue is rejoined in New York City.

The Center, since its inception, has been deeply engaged in the work of planning for the desegregation of schools and has committed its resources to developing quality integrated education for all students; therefore, we are pleased to publish this study which contributes to an understanding of how the issue of desegregation has been treated within New York City.

David Rogers, who conducted the study, with the assistance of Faith Kortheyer and Roslyn Menzel, brought to it the perception of the sociologist and the insight of a student of management. The report stands as a personal interpretation of a rich collection of data painstakingly gathered over a two-year period, ending in June 1967. It perhaps is worthwhile noting that the report carries the customary strengths and weaknesses of the case study method: richness and depth of detail about process and forces, but the limitations that accrue from lack of comparative data and adequate means for validating hypothetic inferences.

The following material is an abridgment of Rogers' 15-chapter study, and runs to about one-fourth of the original. The abridgment was prepared by Michael D. Usdan, an associate professor of education in the educational administration department of Teachers College, Columbia University. The full report is available for reference at the library of the Center for Urban Education. A commercial publication of the study is currently scheduled by an independent publisher for late in 1968.

Robert A. Dentler

Chapter One

THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL STRUGGLE

Introduction

A New York City school struggle has been going on since the Supreme Court decision of 1954, outlawing segregation. The surface issue relates to the nature, speed, and scope of the Board of Education's desegregation efforts. The New York City Board of Education, like its counterparts in other cities, has been caught in a cross-pressure situation between civil rights groups which have protested that it wasn't moving ahead fast enough, and white, neighborhood school groups which claimed that it was moving much too fast.

But more is at stake in New York City than the simple question of how much desegregation is taking place. The desegregation issue relates to a number of others on which public controversies have developed. They include such matters as the extent of professionalism in the schools and accountability of the school system to the publics it serves; the viability of its administrative structure, codes, and operations for realizing its stated goals of quality integrated education; and its relations with the mayor, other city agencies, and the community. It is all but impossible to discuss the desegregation issue without getting into all these other questions.

This is a study, then, of political and social forces that have affected the extent of Board-mandated reform since 1954. I am concerned with innovation and reform as well as with the issue of desegregation. I focus on the Board's handling of the latter issue as a vehicle for studying the operations of the total system.

Indeed, desegregation was the catalytic issue that brought to the fore a number of larger questions. One of these pertained to the interest group politics of New York City as they affect the power of its Negro and Puerto Rican populations to secure educational services equal to those of the white middle class. Desegregation was one political strategy civil rights groups followed for achieving such services. As I will point out in the study, it didn't work. For a variety of reasons the Board of Education has not desegregated the schools on any scale. Indeed, the amount of segregation has increased since 1954. When most civil rights leaders became convinced that it was beyond their power to press for more desegregation, they turned to other strategies. The basic question of how they can upgrade the quality of education for Negro and Puerto Rican pupils still remains. So does the question of Negro and Puerto Rican power to influence the Board's decisions.

Another issue which has been triggered off by the desegregation controversy is the capacity of the Board of Education as an institution to accommodate to the rapid demographic, social, political, and economic changes going on around it. The fact that the Board did not implement its desegregation plans and was not able to significantly update the quality of education in ghetto schools, despite its many compensatory programs, has called into question the integrity and adequacy of the entire institution. The rising tide of community controversy over desegregation made more visible a number of shortcomings and maladaptations of the system that had existed years before the 1954 decision.

In sum, the school desegregation issue was symbolic and symptomatic of much larger issues. They involved matters of political power, and of the codes and assumptions on which the Board of Education, city government, and other related institutions and interest group alignments were based.

Why New York City

New York City's experiences on these matters make it a strategic case for several reasons.[1] First, its school system has often been a model for those in other large cities. The city is generally farther along in the formulation of desegregation plans and their limited implementation on a selective, local basis than any other large Northern city. The successes and failures of its school and political officials and of various civic groups involved in desegregation controversies are taken into account by their colleagues elsewhere and become guidelines for their actions.

Second, conditions for school desegregation are in many respects more favorable in New York City than elsewhere. Regardless of some impediments to change inherent in its fragmented and bureaucratic governmental institutions, New York City has long been a center of cosmopolitan values, of progressive politics, and of innovation in many fields.[1a] Its present lay Board reflects this, dominated as it is by people with a long record of support for progressive labor and civil rights causes. These individuals share an egalitarian, social reformist outlook that has been a hallmark of the city's political life. Yet, desegregation is not taking place in New York City. It is important to know why, because if it doesn't take place in New York City, there is serious question as to whether it would in any other large Northern city.

Finally, all public education controversies that have been played out around the nation have been contested in their most dramatic forms in New York City. Negro and white parent boycotts over desegregation, demands for more community participation, and teacher strikes or threats of strikes are all commonplace here. In the words of one cynic, the New York City school system is the nightmare toward which many others are moving.

The Focus of the Study

New York City's Board of Education responded immediately to the 1954 Supreme Court decision. Since then it has formulated many desegregation plans, issued many policy statements, and established many subcommissions, commissions, and committees on desegregation. Some of the most advanced policy statements ever written on school desegregation were done so by New York City's Board of Education. And the statements recommended basic, not diversionary strategies, including site selection, rezoning, changes in feeder patterns, pairings and educational complexes and parks. Yet, after more than a decade of such policy statements, there has been little implementation.

The Board's data on ethnic changes in the city's schools show the following trends: First, the number of predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican schools (those having 90 per cent or more Negro and Puerto Rican pupils at the elementary level and 85 per cent at the junior high and high school level) increased from 118 in 1960 to 187 in 1965. In 1960 they accounted for 15 per cent of all schools, in 1965 for 23 per cent, pointing to an increase in minority group segregation. At the same time, the number of predominantly white schools has decreased from 327 to 237, accounting for a decrease from 42 of 31 per cent of schools. Finally, the number of mid-range schools (those with between 10 and 90 per cent Negro and Puerto Rican pupils at the elementary level and 15 to 85 per cent beyond that) increased slightly during this period from 337 to 387, accounting for 43 per cent in 1960 and 46 per cent in 1965.[2] The data thus suggest a mixed picture, with more segregation among Negro and Puerto Rican pupils and less among whites.

This pattern becomes clear if one traces the trends for Negro-Puerto Rican pupils and for white pupils considered separately. In 1960, 41 per cent of Negro-Puerto Rican pupils were in segregated schools, compared with 49 per cent in 1965. And although the proportion of mid-range schools may have gone up slightly, the proportion of Negro and Puerto Rican pupils in such schools actually declined from 56 to 48 per cent.[3] Where there was more desegregation, it was only for whites.

Furthermore, two ways in which the data were grouped may well play down the actual trend toward increased segregation for Negro pupils. First, Puerto Rican and Negro pupils are lumped together in the statistics.[4] Since Puerto Rican pupils attend mid-range and predominantly white schools much more than do Negro pupils, reflecting the wider dispersion of the Puerto Rican population throughout the city, lumping the two groups together only obscures the trend toward segregation for Negroes. Second, by breaking down the mid-range, integrated category of schools into smaller subgroups, the distribution becomes bimodal, with most of the Negro pupils at one end, in schools with from 70 to 90 per cent Negro-Puerto Rican, and most of the whites at the other.

This situation contrasts sharply with the situation in 1960, when many more white and Negro-Puerto Rican pupils were in the middle of the distribution, in schools with 30 to 70 per cent of each ethnic category. In short, there has been a substantial increase in segregation for minority group populations in the last five years.

A standard interpretation for such a trend is that it reflects a change in the entire population of the city, as well as a hardening and extension of housing segregation. The continued out-migration of the white middle class, the continued withdrawal from the public schools of whites who stay in the city, the increase in young, low income Negro and Puerto Rican families whose birth rates are much higher than those of whites, and the mushrooming of low income housing projects, further ghettoizing them and spreading the ghetto community out across the city, all make the task of achieving racial balance in the schools a difficult one.[5]

The increased housing segregation is a special obstacle. It limits the number of fringe areas, correspondingly limiting the prospects for securing a desegregated pupil population, short of massive transfer programs involving long distance traveling. Even the most militant civil rights leaders generally accept the argument that housing segregation has contributed, in part, to school segregation. They're just not willing to give it the same weight as the Board does.

Even if the housing pattern allowed for more school desegregation, so the argument continues, there are further obstacles--chronic scarcities of trained and committed staff, of building space, and of funds. All these factors, then, constitute a formidable array of social forces generally outside the control of school officials, yet limiting their capacity to desegregate on any meaningful scale.

There can be no question about the importance of such conditions. Their impact seemingly serves to corroborate the view that the Board is being held responsible and accountable for changes that it has neither the authority nor the influence to implement. This study is in part a test of that conventional view.

A Political Interpretation of Increasing School Segregation

Data gathered early in the study on the wide and growing gap between the Board's many advanced policy statements and their implementation suggested that there might well be more to the story of increasing segregation than the conventional view implies. The Board's experience on open enrollment, the first desegregation technique it tried, is a case in point. Fewer than 5 per cent of those pupils to whom the plan was applicable in the first four years of its operation (1960-1964) actually transferred.[6] As the authors of the Allen Report on the city's desegregation prospects stated:

> The /Board of Education's own/ Commission on Integration recommendations on the redistribution of pupils through "permissive zoning" and busing were not implemented.[7]

The Board's explanation for the limited success of open enrollment is that Negro parents did not want to have their children transferred out of their local schools. Undoubtedly this was the sentiment of some, and it will always be true of some. On reviewing the history of how open enrollment was introduced, however, it is unfair and inaccurate to place the responsibility on Negro parents for the small numbers who took advantage of the program.

This is how open enrollment generally operated, as related by several school officials and civic leaders who participated actively in the plan.* The Board did not take the initiative in informing the public. It did little to prepare parents, students, staff, and communities participating in the program. And when people were informed, it turned out that local school officials and many headquarters personnel were by and large opposed to the plan.[8] There is no available evidence to suggest, for example, that the Board and school officials had pointed out with much conviction the possible advantages of participating in open enrollment. And there is evidence to suggest otherwise.

The first pamphlets encouraging parents to take advantage of the Open Enrollment plan were prepared by officials of Urban League, with financial assistance from the American Jewish Committee. The Board initially refused to help distribute them.[9] Later, when the Public Housing Authority cooperated, handing them out to minority group populations in projects, and much publicity was given this fact, the Board of Education joined in. In effect, the Board followed rather than led public opinion on the issue.

Extensive records and files furnished to me by some civic leaders and school officials suggest a widespread pattern of sabotage by principals, teachers, and field superintendents, and a very limited publicity campaign from headquarters. The failure of principals to inform Negro parents in ghetto schools of new opportunities to send their children to under-utilized "white" schools was so widespread, in fact, that headquarters took over more and more of this function. The further practice, engaged in by many principals and teachers, of lecturing to Negro parents on the many costs of transferring their children, and the rather strong urging that parents keep their children in local, neighborhood schools, undoubtedly contributed to the low percentage who participated.

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*Further documentation on open enrollment and pairing, and on the general outlook and behavior of the professional bureaucracy and the administration, is contained in several chapters of the study that are not included in this abridgement. Editor's note.

Such field sabotage took place in receiving as well as sending schools. More often than not, principals in receiving schools, anxious to preserve homogeneous classes, would end up placing in-coming Negro pupils in segregated situations. Likewise, the limited preparation of students parents, school officials, and communities (in regard to receiving schools) for in-coming students also served to discourage Negro parents. The limited resources headquarters allocated for such preparation and its failure to sanction principals and teachers who scuttled the plan further contributed to its minimal implementation. To top it all off, sabotage at one end could build on sabotage at the other. Principals in sending schools referred to segregated conditions in receiving schools in urging parents not to transfer their children.[10]

The behavior of principals participating in the Open Enrollment program was quite rational, given their interests. Principals from sending schools feared that large numbers of pupil transfers might reflect adversely on the quality of their schools. Many were oriented toward making a good showing to their district superintendent and to headquarters, so that they could be in line for promotions or transfers. If too many Negro parents transferred their children, some principals undoubtedly feared that it might suggest to the Board that there was much parent dissatisfaction. Teachers had the same interests and motivations. On more educational grounds, teachers and principals were against open enrollment because they wanted to keep at least a few potentially "high achievers." Understandably they felt that such children might serve as role models for their peers.

While the actions of teachers and principals were rational, given their interests and values, such actions were in contradiction with headquarters directives and led to continued insubordination and limited implementation of a desegregation plan that was seemingly intended by headquarters to be carried out.

A test of the hypothesis that more Negro and Puerto Rican pupils would have participated in Open Enrollment, if the plan had been properly implemented, was provided in June 1964, with the Board's Free Choice Transfer plan.[11] This was an extension of open enrollment that gave sixth grade pupils in ghetto schools a choice of transferring to under-utilized "white" junior high schools or of going on to junior high schools within the ghetto. Superintendent Calvin Gross ordered the plan, after being pushed to do so by leaders of civil rights organizations who had been meeting with him in private.

The people who had negotiated the plan with Gross and his staff were well aware of all the ways the Open Enrollment plan had been subverted. They set up a monitoring system in all the sending schools, to check on the degree to which teachers and principals supported the Free Choice Transfer plan. As expected, school officials did not publicize it in many cases. As also expected, principals gave lectures to parents on the many costs of transferring their children, urging them not to participate in the plan. Civil rights leaders systematically collected all the information they could on these incidents, naming particular teachers, principals, schools, and dates. They presented the data to Gross.[12]

He responded at first with disbelief. One of his top headquarters officials, Dr. Jacob Landers, told him that principals were professionals and wouldn't act that way. Headquarters officials were so swayed by the data, however, that Gross called a special meeting at headquarters of all principals involved in the program and told them that he really meant that the plan should be implemented. According to final Board estimates, roughly 25 per cent of those pupils eligible for transfer availed themselves of the opportunity. This was in contrast to the 3 per cent who had participated in open enrollment.[13]

The Board's policy statements, however, went well beyond such voluntary plans. They included, as I mentioned, rezoning, changes in feeder patterns, and fundamental changes in the construction program, with schools to be built in fringe areas wherever possible. On balance, the policy statements simply were never implemented. For example, 39 of the 106 projects in the Board's 1964-65 building program were for local school areas where the estimated ethnic composition of the school was 90 per cent or more Negro and Puerto Rican pupils. In short, over one-third of the schools planned were guaranteed to be segregated, though many might have been located in fringe areas to prevent that. The Board's most recent construction budget calls for over 55 per cent of its funds for segregated schools.[14] To quote the Allen Report once again:

> The school building program as presently set forth reinforces substantially the historic pattern of building on sites within the most segregated areas. This is the case chiefly in Negro residential areas, but it is also true in some mainly white neighborhoods, and thus helps to intensify both forms of segregation.[15]

The consistent Board practice has been to "build the schools where the children are," despite continued pressure from civil rights groups and continued encouragement from the State Education Department to do otherwise. Indeed, the construction program is basic to the whole segregation problem. Civil rights pressures have continued unabated in this field, but to no avail. In sum, the Board's actual school construction and site selection decision are at wide variance with its stated desegregation policies.

But why is it that there is so little implementation? Why has the Board, for example, tended to zone and build schools in a way that followed rather than ran counter to the segregated housing pattern? And why has it even zoned in some areas to counteract an integrated housing pattern? To answer these questions is to suggest some of the political forces that have contributed -- substantially, I think -- to the increased segregation of New York City's schools.

The examples I have cited indicate that the Board's actions and inactions on desegregation and related issues can best be interpreted by looking at the administrative and political context in which educational decisions get made. The Board and superintendent formulate plans and implement them with a keen sense of who their various constituencies are. They always act within what students of administration refer to as the "zones of acceptance" or conceptions of "legitimacy" of the various publics being affected, ranging all the way from professional groups inside the school system to community groups, real estate interests, and politicians. If the Board is to move ahead on new plans, it has the problem of mobilizing support within the school system and in the community. These issues are essentially political matters, and any attempt to characterize public education decisions in some other fashion -- "we're doing what is educationally right and that's the only consideration" -- falls far short of describing how such decisions are arrived at.

Further, "technical" education decisions are not simply "technical." All administrative decisions involve value assessments and assumptions. They involve choices as to some particular modes of allocation of scarce resources among competing publics, they involve conceptions as to priorities, and they involve conceptions of alternative costs. Such questions as: "Is it better to build schools in fringe areas or in segregated communities?" "Should particular schools be consolidated or not?" "Should the Board concentrate more on compensatory education programs or on desegregation?" are as much political as educational ones.

A "technocratic" bias has long dominated thinking within the education profession, though education of course is not alone in this regard. More than in most other areas, however, the education profession is beginning to have forced on itself a recognition that personal, professional, and institutional codes affect its decisions.

The mythology that educational decisions can be separated from values and politics is just that. It is inaccurate as a description of how such decisions are in fact made. And it raises serious public policy questions regarding the amount of insulation the education profession should have from client controls.

The organization of this study reflects all these considerations. I have made the assumption that a number of political and social forces have affected the Board of Education's decisions. The conceptual scheme I use to study such forces is a very simple one. I have ordered the inquiry around several constellations of influence and power that have affected decision-making in the school system at both the policy and implementation stages.

One constellation is what I will refer to as ecological and situational factors. These include demographic and housing patterns, the availability of staff, school plant facilities, and funds. Changing neighborhood patterns affect the composition and cohesiveness of various constituencies making demands on the Board. They also affect prospects for desegregation. So does the amount of Board resources. Chapter Three focuses on the ecological setting.

The main part of the study deals more directly with the "politics" of educational decision-making and analyzes the different kinds of pressure and constraints that the Board faces. The effect of the interest group politics of the city on public education matters is of particular concern, and the largest portion of this abridgement deals with this issue. The alignments of civic groups into various coalitions, the positions they take, and the resources and channels of access they have to Board and city officials all place upper and lower limits on the substance of the Board's programs and on the speed with which they are implemented. Chapters four through six deal with this theme in some detail. I consider the neighborhood school opposition in Chapter Four, and civil rights groups and moderates in chapters five and six.

A second constellation is the school system itself. The resources of its top leadership, the power and influence of various professional groups, and the administrative structure and codes of the Board have a major effect on the amount of innovation and reform that is implemented. The Board's strategies for relating to various interest groups and coalitions are also important. The timing of the Board's decisions and its attempts at consulting and bargaining with civic groups affect their willingness to support particular plans. The Board does not just passively reflect public opinion. Chapter Two describes the New York City Board of Education and its top decision makers. The description in this chapter of the educational setting in New York City is a backdrop for subsequent sections.

School decisions are made within a broad political context that includes numerous city agencies. Those agencies that review the Board's capital budget for school construction, that are responsible for housing, urban renewal, and poverty decisions, and that serve as intermediaries between civic groups and the Board are all relevant. They include the mayor, the Board of Estimate, the City Planning Commission, the Site Selection Board, the City Commission on Human Rights, the Housing Authority, and the Housing and Redevelopment Board. I discuss their roles in public education controversies in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight summarizes highlights of the study.

Methodology

Since the New York City Board of Education is such a large and complex institution, a few general comments are in order regarding the procedures I used to study it. My sources for data were informant interviews, observation meetings and hearings, mass media coverage of events, newsletters and documents put out by interested groups, and various studies done by and for the Board of Education. Since one of the conditions of New York City politics is what some have referred to as its "over-organized" and "factional" quality, and since all interest groups articulate their views in public with considerable frequency, it is difficult to suffer from an absence of data in a study of this nature.

It is possible, of course, to suffer from the lack of relevant and pointed data. Fortunately, we were able to gain entree to and interview virtually every influential leader and activist on the issue of desegregation, at least for the period I was most interested in interpreting, namely, the last few years. So much of the controversy since 1963 has been so visible and so intense, it was not difficult to locate leaders and activists.

The time period my investigation concentrates most heavily on is from May 1963 through June 1964. I chose the 1963 date because it coincides with the upsurge in militancy of civil rights groups, which appeared at the same time as a query from the state education commissioner, asking all local school boards throughout the state to report on their plans for increasing the amount of racial balance in their schools.

Chapter Two

THE BOARD AND ITS TOP DECISION MAKERS

The Institution: Some General Facts and Highlights

The New York City school system is by far the largest in the nation, employing more than fifty thousand teachers, several thousand administrators and technicians, and serving close to 1,100,000 pupils.[1] It is spread over the five boroughs of the city and services many different populations and communities. The problems and needs of its many clients are often quite different, yet they all are served under a single citywide Board. Indeed, historically the system has become progressively more centralized, with central headquarters officials responsible for decisions on even the most trivial matters -- from providing light bulbs, doorknobs, and erasers to deciding on transportation facilities.[2]

The trend toward increased centralization and bureaucracy, which increased the administrative and pedagogical problems even in white middle class areas, made it much more difficult to run the schools in such areas as Harlem, Brownsville, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. It is in these ghetto communities that the pathologies of the centralized Board have become so obvious.

The Board's legal and political relations with the New York City government, intended to maintain high levels of performance and professionalism, have not counteracted the harmful effects of having a centralized system. The three most significant aspects of the Board's relations to the city are (1) the rules governing the selection of the lay Board, (2) the system's fiscal status, and (3) its ties with political party and machine organizations.

The lay Board is an appointed body. Comparative studies suggest that appointed boards are less likely either to become vulnerable to external political pressures than those that are elected or to develop polarized factions which prevent their acting on controversial issues.* Yet, the appointed-board procedure has not been sufficient to reform the New York City school system. The composition of the nominating committee in part makes the lay Board responsive to only a narrowly based constituency and some Board members and their sponsors still engage in active campaigning for office.

The disadvantages of this system are the lack of visibility of the lay board's deliberations to large portions of the community and city government, and the limited provision for outside review and control. Another liability is the system's fiscal dependence on the city. It does not have its own taxing powers but has to subject its capital and expense budgets to such city agencies as the Board of Estimate, the City Planning Commission, the Site Selection Board, and the mayor. These agencies can and often do delay school construction decisions, though the basic policy position of the Board as to where schools should be located, at what capacity, and in what order of priority is rarely questioned by city agencies. Furthermore, the Board operates under a "lump sum" budget which allows it to allocate its funds without much outside review. The Board's fiscal dependence, then, has little political meaning.

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*Elected boards are likely to include partisans of warring pressure groups in periods of controversy and end up in the same internal conflicts that exist within the community.

One characteristic of the New York City school system that distinguishes it from many others in large Northern cities is its insulation from machine and party politics. It is perhaps farther along in the process of educational reform than any other big city system, instituting a professional merit system, presided over by a Board of Examiners whose selection procedures have been refined through years of experience. Patronage considerations play less of a role in affecting Board appointments than they did a generation or two ago.

While this reform should have led to more professionalism, it has not. Under the guise of professionalism, a number of protectionist practices that are distinctly nonprofessional have begun to affect the system -- for example, the resistance of principals, district superintendents, and other supervisory groups as well as teachers to desegregation, decentralization, and such procedural changes as the abolition of the IQ test. A new form of "educational politics" has evolved in which established professional groups resisted many such proposed innovations by arguing that they would lead to a decline of standards. Often these innovations, like the four-year comprehensive high school, for example, had already achieved national acceptance within the academic and educational community, yet they were initially rejected in New York City.[3]

Furthermore, there are many headquarters positions not under the Board of Examiners and often filled on the basis of personal friendship and loyalty rather than on technical competence. While the two need not always be incompatible, they sometimes are. Appointments to divisional offices, bureaus, and as directors or administrators on special projects often went to people who followed tradition, had been in the system for years and even decades, and had always taken politically safe positions on pedagogical and social issues. Since the examination system contributed to the recruitment almost exclusively of local New Yorkers for teaching posts and New York City teachers for supervisory positions, a pattern of inbreeding was developed that limited the capacity of the system for innovation. It is no different in this regard from most big city school systems, which nevertheless does not mitigate the bad effects of the situation.

Yet, the New York City school system has many other characteristics that are potentially functional for innovation and reform. One is its liberalism, shaped in large degree by the political climate of Manhattan. New York City has long been a center of cosmopolitan values, of progressive politics, and of innovation in many fields. The schools reflected this progressivism in the past, with their many new programs, their nationally renowned high schools, and their many scholarship and award winners. Though some of the recollections of local New Yorkers of the past achievements of the schools may be phantasy, public educators throughout the nation looked to the city's schools for new ideas.

Furthermore, the present Board still reflects this progressive spirit, dominated as it is by people with a long record of support for progressive and civil rights causes. They share an egalitarian, social reformist outlook that has been a hallmark of the city's political life. The absence of effective programs for desegregation and upgrading the quality of education in ghetto and integrated schools suggests that the progressive outlook of the lay Board and some members of the professional staff are not enough.

It is not a liberal ideology that is lacking. The problem rather is that a number of bureaucratic impediments exist which prevent the liberals in the school system from implementing their ideology. They have been so caught up in trying to win over a resisting professional staff, while at the same time defending the staff and the system against outside attack, that they have not been able to provide the leadership for needed reforms. One civic group informant suggested: "The lay Board was afraid to joust with the professional staff. The administration was really more powerful. That's really the whole story."[4]

As already noted, the New York City Board of Education's policy statements and programs for desegregation and the upgrading of ghetto schools are on paper among the most extensive of any city in the nation. It was the first large city to have an Open Enrollment plan, fringe area construction or rezoning for desegregation, and pairings. It was also the first to develop such advanced policy statements and to set up separate headquarters units on zoning, community relations, and integration.

The Board's numerous programs for compensatory education for ghetto schools are equally impressive on paper.[5] Starting with a demonstration guidance program in a West Harlem-Washington Heights junior high school, the Board has several plans to raise reading and achievement levels in ghetto schools. More than three hundred such schools have been labeled as "special service" schools, and the Board spends $150 more per pupil there than in middle class schools, providing smaller class size, a lower teacher-to-student ratio, and many more remedial reading and other specialists. It developed a program called Higher Horizons, which spread the procedures of the original demonstration guidance program to 30 ghetto schools, set up a More Effective Schools program (developed in collaboration with the teachers union) in 20 more ghetto schools, with smaller class size and more staff. The All Day NeighborhoodSchools program, in operation since 1936, provides remedial help in ghetto schools. The after-school programs, special programs for Puerto Rican pupils, programs to absorb Negro teachers displaced by school desegregation in Southern cities are other experiments. The new College Bound program helps minority group high school students and encourages more of them to go on to college. The preschool programs were underway before the federal government started financing Head Start. Ungraded and heterogeneous classes have been instituted on an experimental basis. Group IQ tests, seen as a discriminatory device to segregate minority group and white children, have been eliminated. The Board has developed African studies curricula, textbooks on Negro history, and urban readers. It has many in-service training programs in intergroup and race relations for teachers. It has been developing plans to eliminate some outmoded vocational high schools and to replace them with four-year comprehensive high schools. It also has plans for a 4-4-4 grade organization, with four-year middle schools to be located and zoned for more desegregation than has existed in the junior high schools. And these are just a few of the many plans the Board has developed.

They constitute a very impressive list, and they all seemingly indicate a strong positive commitment to change on the part of the Board. The plans are especially impressive relative to what many other big city school systems have done. But they haven't produced any results, because the system itself doesn't work. Higher Horizons failed according to the Board's own evaluation data and was quietly phased out in 1966. New York City was the first to implement Open Enrollment, but it was also one of the first to kill it, and it did the same with pairings.

The Lay Board

One essential condition for innovation in the New York City schools, as in any large organization, is that its top administrators and policy makers have the commitment and resources to effect change. The system is set up in such a way, however, that even though they have such a commitment, they are not able to exercise it. One of the Board's major characteristics is a pattern of weak leadership. People in top positions have limited resources to mandate change. This is a structural and political condition rather than a psychological one.[6] Most of the liberals on the lay Board have been no more effective in pressing for reform than their moderate or conservative colleagues, and neither have any of the system's four superintendents of the past couple of decades. Even when they choose to exercise power they are limited in what they can do -- by the professional staff, outdated laws and traditions, and the enormity of the problems they confront.

The lay Board and the superintendent might have mandated more change if they had been able to work together effectively. They rarely have, regardless of who was in office, because of a number of conflicts, ambiguities, and lack of trust in their relationships, difficulties that are built into the system, compounding the weakness of each party.

Recruitment. The lay Board is selected on an ethnic and geographical basis to include three Protestants, three Catholics, and three Jews (a tradition referred to by one top school official as "the Noah's Ark principle of Board selection"), which reflects the pattern of ethnic politics in the city. Organizations representing all three religious groups play an active role in pressing for Board appointments. There is also an accepted code that boroughs should be represented in proportion to their populations. Membership on the lay Board is highly prestigious, and some people reportedly spend much time and energy campaigning informally for office, securing signatures and gaining the support of influential organizations in the city.[7] Several informants suggested that a kind of "politics of gratitude" existed, whereby Board members would orient their actions primarily to the organizations who helped put them in.[8] Some Board members saw themselves as oriented toward the interests of the entire city, rather than any single organization, but many were conspicuously attentive to the interests of a particular constituency.

Since 1961 a selection board has been the nominating panel for Board members. As specified by law, the selection board is required to send to the mayor at least three names of qualified candidates for membership on the Board for each vacancy. Board members are appointed for seven year terms which are staggered.

The selection board includes the presidents of Columbia University, The City University of New York, New York University, The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the Commerce and Industry Association of New York, the Public Education Association, the United Parents Association, the League of Women Voters of the City of New York, the Citizens Union, and the Citizens Budget Commission. Though a number of organizations are included, they are actually representative of a narrowly based segment of the city, and none is primarily attuned to the interests and problems of the ghetto populations.

It is quite unlikely that changing the composition of the selection board and consequently of the lay Board is going to affect appreciably the capacity of the school system for innovation. People with a liberal outlook have not been able to accomplish much, and that is unfortunately not the level where the power is. Nevertheless, in the interests of making the Board more attuned to problems in the ghetto, there is much to be said for including more spokesmen for the poor in the selection process and on the Board itself.

Legal Mandate and Activities. As trustees of the citizenry and as watchdogs over the school system's operations, the lay Board has the responsibility for establishing basic policy and seeing to it that the policy is carried out. Its members are the system's top decision makers, and the superintendent is ultimately responsible to them for programs that are implemented. In fact, however, the Board merely goes through the motions of making policy and monitoring how it is implemented. Many school officials and civic leaders report that this lay Board is not very powerful and perhaps less so than the boards of the 1950's.

The lay Board is generally organized into a committee system, with each member acting as a chairman of one committee and as a member of two others.[9] The committees cover such matters as integration, business affairs, law and legislation, educational affairs, community relations, buildings and maintenance, city, state, and federal programs, and liaison with other cities and states. Each board member tends to become a specialist on a particular set of problems, but most know little about education or about the school system, outside their particular field of interest.

The Board's priorities over the past few years have been desegregation and administrative reorganization. There have been so many crises, however, and the school system has so many things wrong with it, that there has been little time for long-range planning. Several top headquarters officials suggested that the Board was usually just one short step ahead of demands from various protest groups and sometimes not even that far ahead.

Since late 1966, the Board's priorities have shifted somewhat, because of the shift in community protests. Desegregation is now only a minor issue, as decentralization and community demands for power in local school decisions have become the new rallying cries of protest groups. The Board now has three decentralization experiments underway and is investigating the possibility of setting up others, but community protest over its handling of that issue continues. The system is frequently oberwhelmed by several major protests at once and thus is unable to cope with any in a satisfactory manner.

Some of the long-range issues that the Board has been working on with limited success are decentralization, desegregation, reforming personnel and recruitment procedures, establishment of harmonious relationships with the mayor and his administration, and setting up federally funded programs for poverty areas.

No clear solutions to any of these problems exist, or at least none for which the necessary political support can be mobilized. So many different ideas exist on decentralization reforms, for example, that it may take several years before any program becomes established on a system-wide scale.

Changing procedures for the selection of teachers and supervisors has had high priority at a time when there is a desperate need for more personnel -- and preferably some outsiders with a sense of daring and risk. The New York City schools have an outdated civil service system much like that of other municipal agencies. Recommendations to update examination procedures and eliminate the Board of Examiners had been made as early as 1951, and the lay Board has made efforts in this direction since 1962, but it is still struggling with the problem.[10] Board President Alfred Giardino* worked out a compromise plan in February 1967 to cut the size of the Board of Examiners, streamline plalement and testing procedures, and open up teaching and supervisory appointments to out-of-city and state applicants. His recommendations fell far short of those of an NYU study team commissioned to investigate the matter and of those of many civic groups.[11] There has been strong opposition from the Council of Supervisory Associations (CSA), the peak association of supervisors, even to the modest changes Giardino has suggested, but he was able to push them through.

The Board has started to move ahead more forcefully on instituting a new performance budgeting system to increase administrative efficiency,[12] than it has on the problems of desegregation and decentralization. The fact that it was pushed to do so by Mayor Lindsay and the Temporary Commission on City Finances originally set up by Mayor Wagner has something to do with its greater activity on this problem. Even on this matter, however, preliminary meetings of Board officials with outside experts from Electronic Data Processing, Inc., and Stanford University indicate that it may take three years and perhaps longer before changes are put into effect.

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*Mr. Giardino resigned from his position in May 1968. Editor's note.

One of the reasons for the Board's ineffectiveness is that it inherited a set of problems of such magnitude that it would take years before it could begin to straighten them out. Also, the internal legal and political structure of the system prevents the lay Board from taking even the minimum steps necessary to revamp the institution, as does the seeming reluctance of Board members to engage in the massive political struggle that would be necessary to move the professional bureaucracy toward reform. Board members know what reforms are necessary, but some hold strongly to the view that head-on public collisions with their professional staff and its powerful lobby in Albany will only be self-defeating, and they may be right. The Board members have committed themselves to a slow, reformist strategy, but the schools have not improved much under their direction.

In the face of increasing attacks on the schools, this lay Board has acquired the widespread reputation for weakness among headquarters professionals, field supervisors, numerous civic groups, and city officials, which further limits its capacity to exert leadership. Of special interest is the question of how much of the Board's weakness is situational and how much it is a product of the outlook and psychology of Board members.

Political Resources and Influence. The lay Board operates under many handicaps, primarily because it does not have the staff, money, expertise, time, or energy to do an effective job. Its members are unpaid, and all except one have outside careers, in addition to their Board duties. Former Board President Max Rubin, for example, who was on the Board from 1961 until the end of 1963, all but gave up his lucrative law practice to tend to Board duties. He was forced to resign, reportedly ill and demoralized by the system's many problems.

One of the problems of the Board is the legal restraints under which it functions. It is required to attend to endless petty details ranging from school maintenance and construction contracts to the purchasing of supplies, and it has little time left to think about important policy questions. And when it does develop new ideas for curriculum, instructional methods, staffing and administrative procedures, it must then hand over to the professional staff the responsibility for refining the ideas and carrying them out, all the while having to bargain with them to accept even the most limited reforms. Even if the lay Board had a large staff, it would probably only make little headway on these problems, but it has almost no staff. The Board is very much aware of the need for more staff, yet state education laws and pressures from the Board of Examiners have prevented it from recruiting one, lest such a staff become too powerful.

An obvious reason for the Board not having a larger staff is the fear by the professionals that they will lose some of their power. They still have the support of enough state education officials and civic groups in the city to win on this controversy. The pattern has been for the Board to set up staffs which soon come under attack and are then dismantled, only to be resurrected by the next Board. The cycle has repeated many times in the past ten to 15 years.

Indeed, the present reform Board came into being in 1961, largely because its predecessor was dismissed for "meddling" in administration. The new Board recognized almost immediately the absurdity of staying out of administration, and it became more and more involved in the operations of the system.[13]

In 1964, after the Board decided that Superintendent Gross was not providing adequate leadership, it told him it wanted an independent research staff. Gross reacted to the request as had previous superintendents, seeing such a staff as a threat to his authority. He opposed the lay Board and won his case.[14]

However, after Gross was dismissed in March 1965, the lay Board set up its own committees once more, and they have been at work ever since.[15] It also recruited Harold Siegel, the former executive director of the United Parents Association, as a fulltime researcher and a liaison between the Board, the professional staff, and the community. Siegel since has become the Board's official secretary, with three fulltime researchers to service the Board with him.

The lay Board has attempted in an informal way to do what it has been prevented from doing formally. It has worked with various consultants who serve at the Board's pleasure, despite objections from the Board of Examiners and other inside professionals. Nevertheless, it is cautious about further expanding its staff, because such a move would require a change in state education laws, thereby incurring the wrath and opposition of city and state education officials, as well as their civic allies. This is an untenable situation for a lay Board committed to reform and innovation.

The solution to this problem would be for the lay Board to rally support from the mayor and various civic groups for the legislative changes which are needed to set up and expand its professional staff. Informal, makeshift arrangements, such as having experts serve as consultants, must eventually be replaced by a legally institutionalized procedure that enables the Board to employ its own staff without fear of reprisal. Short of such changes, the Board lacks the resources to function adequately.

The lay Board, then, has the difficult responsibility for making policy and being accountable for its implementation, while at the same time not having the resources to do either very well. Its policy decisions are dependent on studies and evaluations provided by headquarters technicians, many of whom want to protect their own interests and careers and are hesitant to incur the wrath of supervisory groups. In cases where the Board's policy statements and programs may seem to the headquarters and field staff to be too advanced, they can be watered down or subverted in their implementation. And since the Board does not have its own staff to monitor the carrying out of various programs and knows so little about local conditions, it must rely upon the professionals inside the system. Finally, evaluations of programs were, until very recently, done by insiders. The system, for the most part, is locked in and self-reinforcing at every turn.

It is the superintendent and his staff who actually make policy. They have all the research staff, all the data, and much of the expertise. Yet, they often have a vested interest in maintaining the system the way it is. Their initial advice to the Board regarding the feasibility of particular new programs is likely to be replete with judgments about their many costs, and with the judgments presented as facts. This attitude helps explain the increasing gap between the Board's advanced policy statements on desegregation and their implementation.

If the Board is criticized by civic groups about particular programs, its own questioning of what has been done would function as a public disavowal of the superintendent and his staff. The professionals realize this and feel that they can remain insulated from lay Board and civic review all the way down the line in the chain of command. The Board cannot possibly keep track of all administrative decisions that are made, as particular policy statements and programs become progressively specified for final implementation.

To be sure, if a policy is sabotaged too blatantly in its implementation, there is always the possibility that civic groups will contact Board members and complain. They may be referred to the professional staff, however, and sent from unit to unit, each abdicating responsibility. The lay Board may pick up the complaint, but only if it is loud, is backed by responsible groups, is a general issue with citywide implications, appeals to the Board's collective social conscience, and is threatening politically. This combination of circumstances is rare. It seems clear that unless there is much more outside review (both professional and lay) over the operations of the school system, the declining quality of education and the segregation of the past couple of decades can only increase.

Outlook on School Desegregation. Board members are deeply pessimistic about the prospects of desegregating the New York City school system -- in part as a consequence of the fact that they have carried on a narrowly based dialogue with moderate, centrist groups and tended to view the desegregation issue as these groups did. (See Chapter Six) Liberal Board members, especially, indicate deep pessimism regarding the prospects for school desegregation. Their views are sometimes uninformed as to realities of how desegregation plans had been implemented in the past. One Board member said: "We have tried open enrollment across the board and it hasn't had much effect on segregation."[16] This view represented a limited awareness of how Open Enrollment was implemented.

Another liberal Board member, aware of the necessity for citywide planning for desegregation, noted: "The desegregation problem will only be solved through the commitment to an open city policy, and that will have to come from the Mayor. We would like to participate." Unfortunately, this very positive attitude toward desegregation gets lost in the bureaucratic entanglements of the Board of Education, and the city, state, and federal governments which have not yet worked effectively together in planning for desegregation.

Yet, there has not been strong leadership from the liberals on the lay Board for desegregation, even in instances where such planning might be possible. When a leader of a neighborhood school group asked one of the liberal Board members, for example, what he thought the justification was for the Board's four pairings, he said: "Faith." When a local school board from East Brooklyn met with the Board in private, and one of its spokesmen asked why the central Board felt the educational park was one solution to the city's educational problems, there was silence, after which one liberal Board member suggested that this person read some articles on the subject. It is not the fact that the liberal Board members are unwilling to set up some educational parks if the politics of the situation warrant, but they are overwhelmed with their many tasks and are ill-equipped to make technical judgments about such innovations as parks.

The capacity of liberal Board members to line up enough votes is also critical. Unless a Board member is genuinely committed to a particular cause and can mobilize support from his colleagues for it, there is little likelihood of reform. One top headquarters official related: "Lloyd Garrison had a very hard time when he was president, because it was difficult for him to drum up the votes for integration. He might count on one or two votes, but most of the others were not so easy to get." Furthermore, the superintendent's voiced opinion is practically equal to a veto or a demand for acceptance.

The results of these political constraints seem clear. There has been some movement on desegregation since 1965, when particular recommendations of the Allen Report were adopted as policy. Some educational parks have been planned and some middle schools and four-year comprehensive high schools have been set up. But the pace of change is slower than the physical possibilities or Board resources permit. The two parks are not generally regarded by planners as parks at all, and the middle schools are still for three rather than four grades and have been located in segregated areas. The Board has given up on fringe area construction, there have been months of delay on an East Brooklyn park, and junior high and high school zoning in such areas as Southeast Queens, Brooklyn, and the Northeast Bronx is still done in a way to perpetuate segregation.

The Superintendent. Many of the same forces that contribute to the limited authority and power of the lay Board also limit the superintendent. He is controlled by the same power blocs at headquarters and in the field. The teachers' union, principals' associations, department chairmen, divisional and bureau heads, the Board of Examiners, and the Council of Supervisory Associations all limit his capacity to innovate. They are fragmented from one another, and this, combined with limited communication and coordination across units, makes it difficult to institute reforms with a modicum of efficiency. Each unit within the system is oriented more toward its own needs than toward overall system goals. At the policymaking level, any new programs that represent significant departures from the old structure are almost automatically resisted. Professional associations function as protectionist organizations, rather than as agencies to develop, maintain, and enforce professional standards.

The New York City school system, then, suffers from weak leadership. The pattern has much less to do with the abilities of particular superintendents and lay boards than it does with the many structural constraints they face, and the stringent cultural traditions and operating codes within the system. If personality and leadership ability had much to do with the extent of innovation in the system, one would expect some variation in the latter under different administrations. Yet, the system has had four superintendents and three lay boards over the past 12 years, with little change in its operations.

These bureaucratic and structural conditions are not unique to the New York City school system. All big city school systems face internal and external problems, and no others have handled them much moresuccessfully than New York City, with the possible exception of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Lay boards and superintendents are weak in all big cities because they confront the same protectionist interests among teachers and supervisors, and this is a condition characteristic of public education as a national institution. Educators in big cities have remained insulated from the social changes of recent decades and have become protectionist in the face of new demands by citizen groups.

The Pervasive Power Of The Professional Bureaucracy

What is unique about New York City is its size and ethnic diversity. Its size alone differentiates it from any other city, contributing to the growth of a mammoth bureaucracy and large professional organizations. The Board of Superintendents was the system's major decision-making body until 1961 (and was then made up of the eight associate superintendents, the deputy superintendent, and the superintendent), when it was formally abolished (although it functioned informally until 1966). The superintendent under this system could be outnumbered, and he could maintain power only through building his own coalition within this inner core of the system's highest ranking officials.

The most powerful organization of the professional groups is the Council of Supervisory Associations (CSA), which has successfully blocked numerous plans for desegregation and administrative change over the past several years. When it has not been able to prevent new policies from being formulated, it has been able to subvert their implementation, thereby helping to discredit their validity for New York City. Any superintendent who had plans for innovation was defined as an "outsider" and would be readily cut down by these coalesced groups.

The CSA formed in 1963 and represents all the field supervisors -- principals, department chairmen, district superintendents, administrative assistants, and various staff personnel. Collectively through the CSA, these groups have opposed virtually every desegregation plan or administrative reform. One of their most revered concepts has been that of the neighborhood school, and they have defended it against all demands for desegregation, even to the point of leading open rebellions against Calvin Gross and the lay Board during the period of controversy around pairings and implementation of the Allen Report recommendations for junior high and high school desegregation. When President Alfred Giardino of the lay Board formulated his compromise proposals in February 1967 to reform personnel, recruitment, and examination procedures, they waged a strong campaign in Albany to prevent legislative changes necessary for implementation of these reforms.[17] And they did so, even as the Board of Examiners itself came to accept, however reluctantly, Giardino's proposals.

One impetus behind the CSA's political activities is the resentment of field supervisors, especially district superintendents and principals, about what they perceive as the unilateral manner in which the lay Board and top headquarters officials have mandated innovations. After the Board of Superintendents had ceased to function as a viable political body, field supervisors began to feel threatened by the fact that civil rights and other integrationist groups were exerting influence over top decision makers at headquarters and forcing them to bend to pressures. When headquarters started formulating actual desegregation plans without consulting them, the field supervisors staged their revolt.

District superintendents played a major obstructionist role in desegregation controversies, both at the policymaking and implementation stage.[18] In the controversy over school pairings, for example, they resisted strongly most of the original plans that had been developed. One reason for this, in addition to their attachment to the neighborhood school concept, was the resentment many district superintendents had about headquarters taking over many of the decisions they used to exercise informally. It was the district superintendents who in fact made most zoning and site location decisions, regardless of the fact that these decisions were supposed to be made centrally at headquarters. Gross rarely communicated with them and never took them into his confidence. Neither did the lay Board. When plans finally did begin to be rofmulated at headquarters and were announced in a unilateral way, district superintendents revolted. Principals, of course, did too, but they did not have the status that district superintendents had.

One example of this revolt came during the private, closed meetings that the Board held at headquarters in its deliberations over some twenty proposed pairings. In attendance at the meetings were representatives of local school boards, parent associations, and district superintendents. An informant who was present at all the meetings related the following story: "In one of these meetings a district superintendent got up and shouted at Gross in anger, saying that he didn't care what the consequences might be of his making that speech but that he would absolutely refuse to ever be a party to such a bunch of trumped up and politically inspired and expedient plans that were so educationally unsound. He accused Gross of becoming a tool of civil rights leaders and suggested that his could have disastrous effects on the quality of education in the schools. So he was announcing publicly that he would never consent to having any desegregation plans, like the pairings being discussed at that meeting, implemented in his district. This meeting included all the district superintendents. After he finished, they gave him resounding applause. It was enlightening to find that this kind of insubordination could take place before a group of outside citizens."[19]

Since Bernard Donovan has been superintendent, there has been much more of an attempt made by headquarters to consult with district superintendents and to bargain with them for innovations than there had been before. The lay Board has consulted with several district superintendents over such issues as educational parks and zoning plans. Many of them have opposed such plans. They were opposed in many cases on ideological and educational grounds, and they did not want to bear the burdens that implementation of such plans would entail -- for example, having to deal with the community conflicts that could ensue once the plans were implemented.

Field Noncompliance With Headquarters Directives and Desegregation Plans

Though the New York City school system is formally and legally overcentralized, there is a big difference between how the system is formally set up and how it actually works. By informally in this context I mean the authority and powers that lower level field supervisors actually exercised in the day-to-day operations of the nominally centralized system. In fact, though not legally, this is a highly decentralized school system. District superintendents, principals, and teachers have a well-developed tradition of noncompliance with headquarters directives and orders.

It might seem implausible that the system could be at once both overcentralized formally and highly decentralized in its actual operations. Yet, the apparent paradox is easily explained. The noncompliance tradition is a direct outgrowth of the authoritarian and fragmented power structure at headquarters. It was also a response to headquarters red tape and the insulation of headquarters from local conditions and from the community. As field personnel were frustrated in dealings with headquarters, as they were often flooded with directives from numerous headquarters units, and as they saw how uninformed headquarters was about local situations, they developed the rather widely shared code that headquarters could often be disregarded. This was not just a minority point of view held by a small proportion of rebellious and autonomy-striving field officials. Rather it was a part of the culture or shared outlook of this group. One was a deviant if he did not follow it.

The feelings of alienation and distrust of field officials toward headquarters were well-summarized by a field superintendent who had formerly been a high ranking headquarters official. As he related: "At the field superintendents association meetings you'd see this distinct division between the district men and the headquarters men. The latter were regarded as in an ivory tower by the men in the field. Anything coming out of headquarters from someone of peer rank they regarded with a jaundiced eye. Now I'm out in the field, I'm one of the boys, and I'm also somewhat infected with some of their attitudes. I often find myself grumbling: 'Why don't they consult with us?'"[20]

His last point was quite basic. One of the major sources of resentment felt by field officials toward headquarters was that they felt headquarters had often gone ahead with decisions and plans for their district without consulting them. They would then resort to a number of strategies to prevent plans from being implemented.

Such strategies might be of an individual or collective nature. A field superintendent or principal might simply reinterpret a directive to mean that he should do what he could to implement it in the light of his knowledge of local conditions that headquarters did not take into consideration in the plan's original formulation. His reinterpretation could run the gamut from what might be called "passive sabotage" -- as in Open Enrollment plans where Negro and Puerto Rican parents would not be informed of transfer opportunities -- to more active efforts to discredit the plan. An example of the latter would be the widespread practice of principals giving lectures to parents in the school auditorium at the end of the year, telling of the many costs and hardships involved in busing their children out of the district or local school.

If principals and district superintendents felt even more threatened and saw the Board as about to mandate some citywide changes, they would then resort to open rebellion, taking their case to the public in an attempt to discredit the superintendent and the lay Board. The most dramatic example of this was the statement issued by the Council of Supervisory Associations in April 1964, attacking the Board's desegregation intentions.[21] Statements since 1965 by the academic and high school principals associations against the four-year comprehensive high school are of the same order.

Such open rebellions are at least visible enough for headquarters to try to deal with. The passive sabotage is much less visible and is generally not well-known to members of the lay Board. For example, when we confronted one member of the lay Board with the notion that implementation of such plans as Open Enrollment had not been as efficient as it might, he gave a seriously concerned and pained answer: "Do you really believe implementation has been bad?" He then followed it with the statement: "Unfortunately, many of our staff do need training.

They need to be trained into a greater commitment. Yet, it is difficult to train people into attitudes their values haven't led them to."[22] Short of changed attitudes, however, improved administration would certainly help. Principals and district superintendents, though sometimes rebellious, have enough of an "upward orientation" and concern about promotions to want to be thought well of by headquarters.

The insulation of headquarters from the field, then, with many levels separating them, served to protect teachers, principals, and district superintendents from being held accountable and sanctioned for not encouraging minority group pupils to transfer. There was little feedback from the field to headquarters. Though the school system was highly bureaucratized in some respects, in others it was so inefficiently organized so as to permit such noncompliance both to go on to the degree that it did and to go unrecognized.

Noncompliance becomes a significant problem when headquarters directives cover important and controversial matters and are seemingly meant to be followed. The system has always run on this informal code that the people best able to interpret the relevance of a headquarters plan or directive were those out on the firing line who knew all the problems. When the desegregation issue arose, and some limited plans did come down from the top, field personnel took the same liberties in interpreting them as they had with others in the past. This was one of the reasons for the wide and growing gap between the lay Board's policy statements on desegregation and their implementation.

In conclusion, power within the New York City school system has gravitated away from its top decision makers to a series of fragmented bureaucratic power blocs within the system that have successfully resisted most attempted innovations. They have been oriented more toward a protection of their units and personal positions and careers than toward improving the performance of the system. They have been the ones who have in fact made policy, rather than the superintendent or lay Board. The policy they have made has generally been one that preserved traditional administrative and power arrangements as well as standard curriculum and pedagogical techniques. They are insulated from one another, except when they join together in a common cause to resist change, and this insulation is generally reflected in poor vertical and lateral communications.

Attempts at reform by the superintendent and lay Board have little chance of success in such a politicized structure. The superintendents and the Board are dependent on their professionals for data and for cooperation in implementing reforms. And even to get limited compliance with limited reforms, they have to spend much of their time bargaining and maneuvering with the vested interests of the professionals. By the time some compromise is struck, protest groups have become distrustful and alienated and have raised their demands, usually to a level where they cannot be met short of changing many state education laws and numerous administrative procedures. The likelihood of this taking place without the intervention of such powerful institutions as the city administration, political parties, foundations, universities, corporations, and state and federal officials is very limited. Even when innovations can be mandated, they are likely to be subverted in their implementation. The result, then, is a condition of bureaucratic inertia, and that is largely the story of the New York City school system's efforts to deal with many big issues of the past decade, despite its numerous local experiments, most of which have neither been evaluated nor coordinated.

Chapter Three

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING PATTERNS

The demographic experience of New York City over the past couple of decades parallels that of all large Northern cities. The main trends have been an exodus of the white middle class from Manhattan and, increasingly, from the outlying boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx; an in-migration of younger, minority group populations with higher birth rates than the remaining whites; a mushrooming of low-income housing projects in ghetto areas, further ghettoizing these areas; and an extension and hardening of segregated residential patterns.

These demographic and residential changes began in the 1920's when the first wave of Negro migrants from the South started reaching Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and other areas of the city in substantial numbers. The changes have accelerated since 1946, when large numbers of Puerto Ricans and Negroes started settling in New York City.

A recent trend has been the upward mobility of a second or third generation Negro population and their movement to outlying boroughs or to adjacent suburbs. This trend is so far no more than a trickle, but it is likely to accelerate over the next few decades. Its acceleration would bear directly on the city's many social problems. If the population density of Negro ghettos were to decrease, the task of providing more and better services might be easier. There might even be limited prospects for desegregation in some parts of the city where few such prospects have existed before.

Another recent trend has been the in-migration of older middle class whites. This characteristically involves couples or bereaved spouses with grown children, who return to the inner city to escape the costs of commuting, of local taxes, and of maintaining a suburban home that no longer serves its original purposes. These individuals move into middle income and luxury housing, on Manhattan's East Side or Upper West Side, to enjoy the amenities and cultural advantages of the city. They are thus an older middle class population who can be discounted for purposes of contributing to possible school desegregation. They are joined in this respect by many older indigenous white middle class populations in Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn.

Data based on the 1950 and 1960 census, supplemented by a New York City Department of Health survey in 1964, indicate more precisely the nature of these trends. From 1950 to 1960, while the total population of the city decreased ever so slightly (only 109,973), the total white population decreased by 836,807. Meanwhile, there was an increase of 366,268 Puerto Ricans. The increase for Negroes was 360,566.[1]

This change in the ethnic composition of the city continued and may even have accelerated from 1960 to 1964. There was a decline of roughly 539,000 whites during this time, which was accompanied by increases of 285,600 Negroes and 98,600 Puerto Ricans.[2] The Puerto Rican rise, however, has levelled off, as economic development proceeds and employment opportunities expand in Puerto Rico.

The main trend, then, is a discernible and accelerating pattern of out-migration. It is essentially a middle class flight to the suburbs, with Negro and Puerto Rican middle class populations just starting to take part. Even a few lower- and lower-middle class whites are now participating in this trend. They move into small homes in New Jersey, Long Island, or South Westchester.

The flight of the white middle class is undoubtedly a product of many causes. A desire for space, for a home of one's own, for better schools, for an escape from the many annoyances of the inner city (air pollution, traffic congestion, narcotics, crime) probably all enter into such a decision. Two sociologists, Seymour Sudman and Norman Bradburn, suggest in a recent study that a desire for better schools may well be an important reason for moving out.[3] They found, for example, that "among community facilities which attract and keep residents, schools are considered most important." As one of the persons interviewed in their study said: "The kind of people we want here will be attracted by schools only. As long as our schools are over-crowded we can't attract or keep them."

This was a pilot study, and systematic data on why white families leave inner cities do not exist. My interviews and observations at parent and civic association meetings suggest that there may be different motivations for different categories of whites. Lower- and lower-middle-class whites who moved from such outlying boroughs as Queens to adjacent suburbs may well have done so to get away from Negroes and Puerto Ricans and from integrated schools. This was probably less likely for middle- and upper-middle-class whites. If they left the city in search of better schools, it was because of what they saw as the deteriorating quality of the New York City system, rather than the threat of desegregation. Many upwardly mobile, liberal, middle class whites moved away from Manhattan's Upper West Side for that reason.

Age and birth rate differences between the whites who stay (or move back in) and in-coming minority group populations also affect prospects for school desegregation. As noted, the remaining whites are a much older population than Negroes and Puerto Ricans, and many are long past the stage of having school age children. In 1964, roughly 35 per cent of the whites living in the city were 50 years of age or older, compared with 17 per cent for the Negro population and only 13 per cent for Puerto Ricans.[4] Many areas of the city where minority group populations have recently moved in have disproportionate numbers of such an againg white population --Washington Heights, the Upper West Side, and the Lower East Side in Manhattan; the Grand Concourse, Tremont, and Pelham Parkway communities of the Bronx; and Bay Ridge, Coney Island, and East Flatbush in Brooklyn.

The difference in birth rates is also marked. Estimates based on the 1964 Department of Health survey indicate that only 14 per cent of the white families in the city have five or more members in the household, as compared with 24 per cent of Negro families and 34 per cent for Puerto Rican families. These differences are a reflection of social class, religious, and ethnic factors, among others. Negroes and Puerto Ricans are much more a lower socioeconomic status group than whites.

Puerto Ricans have a large Catholic population and a tightly knit family structure as well. Birth rates and family size further limit possibilities for school desegregation.

The following tables highlight the findings:

TABLE I[5]

FAMILY SIZE BY PERCENT

	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6+ persons
White	42	25	15	9	5
Nonwhite	32	23	19	12	11
Puerto Rican	24	21	21	14	20

TABLE II[6]

NYC POPULATION
BY AGE AND ETHNIC GROUP

	Percent Distribution		
	White	Nonwhite	Puerto Rican
Under 5	6.9	11.9	13.3
1-19	20.0	28.6	33.3
20-39	24.8	30.1	31.5
40-49	13.6	12.6	9.9
50 +	34.4	16.5	8.6

The Department of Health has developed its sampling technique to such a degree that there is every likelihood these estimates would be approximated on the city's total population. They indicate how big is the pool of Negro and Puerto Rican public school children, relative to what one might expect from the sheer representation of minority groups in the city's total population. The single fact that Puerto Ricans and Negroes so outnumber whites in the per cent of families with five persons or more is indicative of the trend. Furthermore, those whites with larger families probably include disproportionate numbers of Catholics who, in turn, send their children to parochial schools to a much greater extent than other whites.

All these patterns are reflected in the city's public school population, with the five boroughs at different stages of ethnic succession in what may over the long run be a common demographic experience.

Though most school officials have given up hope that substantial numbers of whites can be attracted back into the city, there are some who feel that Manhattan's Upper West Side and a few other areas of the city might possibly draw back the white middle class into the public school system. A few West Side principals, in collaboration with white middle class parents and civic leaders, have actually been moderately successful in maintaining or even raising white enrollments. It may be argued that these trends are at best only temporary, but some schools have at least demonstrated their holding power. They often do so at some cost, by raising the inducements of fast track classes and homogeneous groupings. The schools are thus segregated internally. If the district superintendent and principals go through with their plan to establish heterogeneous groupings, the commitment of middle class whites to the public schools of the area will be more directly tested.

Yet if any population were to be attracted back into the public schools, it might well be this one. They do have some limited commitments at least to acting out their egalitarian ideologies. But they are also acutely concerned about the intellectual development of their children, and probably would not want to sacrifice the latter for the former.

Future efforts and successes in attracting white middle class populations would depend heavily on the extent to which headquarters and local school officials are willing and able to upgrade the schools' educational programs. An attempt to make some schools in this West Side area demonstration ones, with the help of universities and enlisting broad-based community participation, would help.

One of the many obstacles to success in such attempts at reform is the quality of the teaching and supervisory staff. While many of the personnel in ghetto schools are inadequate, there are many in newly integrated schools like those on the Upper West Side who are equally inadequate. The teachers tend to be older and quite resistent to change. So are many principals. A further obstacle is the limited school space and overcrowding at every level. A new high school opened in September

1966, for example (Louis D. Brandeis High School, 84th St.), almost 100 per cent overutilized.[7] Many parent groups had urged the Board of Education to plan for 4,000 pupils at a minimum. The Board claimed that its projections indicated that no more than 2,300 seats were needed. The community is now so outraged that many have turned away from the public school system in dismay. The problem of overcrowding is not unique to Manhattan's West Side and is even more acute in ghetto and fringe areas. It stands in the way of winning community support and trust among a white population who might contribute in a small way to an upgrading of the school system.

The demographic experience of Manhattan that has contributed so much to its limited white enrollment has been an increase of Puerto Ricans and Negroes in formerly all white or predominantly white areas. One of the most acute problem areas where rapid demographic changes have taken place is East Harlem, running from 96th Street to 132nd (north and south) and from 5th Avenue to the East and Harlem Rivers (east and west). In 1950, the area was still 45-50 per cent white. Now it is closer to 20 per cent white, 50 per cent Puerto Rican, and 30 per cent Negro.[8] The die was actually cast for East Harlem in 1940 when financial institutions, chiefly the Bowery Bank, decided that the area was no longer a fit place in which to carry on their activities. It soon became a community without access to funding, even for the most basic upgrading, and deterioration, in housing especially, proceeded apace. A politics of extreme poverty now dominates the area. The IS 201 controversy was merely the culmination of more than two decades of frustration there.

There is seemingly deterministic demographic trend in New York City's recent history. Negroes and Puerto Ricans have moved into decaying areas of Manhattan and adjacent boroughs that were formerly occupied by Jews, Irish, Italians and other ethnic minorities. The racial frontier, marking the outer perimeters of minority group concentration, kept shifting as transitional, fringe areas tipped. Over time, as more urban renewal took place, dislocating many Negro and Puerto Rican families, as the in-migration continued, and as Negro and Puerto Rican birth rates maintained their high level relative to those of whites, the ghetto populations overflowed.

Whites who have remained in many parts of the city are more often than not an older, more conservative, lower- or lower-middle-class population. They have been less tolerant toward Negroes and Puerto Ricans than the upwardly mobile, middle class liberals who left.

Some parts of the city have become physically integrated, with Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and an older white population living in the same community, but the integration has little social meaning. The diverse racial, ethnic, and generational groups live in separate worlds. The Upper West Side of Manhattan is an example.

There still remain, however, many areas of upper-middle- or upper-class white concentrations. Manhattan's Upper East Side, for example, contains most of the city's affluent white populations. They send their children to private schools. There are, in addition, some exclusive communities in Queens and Brooklyn. They have generally held the line against housing or school desegregation.

The trends outlined are not completely deterministic and inevitable. They are perpetuated by numerous institutional and political supports. Real estate developer, broker, banking, and home owner interests, as well as numerous city agencies have contributed to this increase in segregation. The latter have tended to shape their policies mainly in response to constituency pressures. Since the white community was much more organized than the minority groups, housing and school projects were located and zoned to maintain and expand patterns of segregation. A combination of more political pressure from minority group populations and more leadership from city officials might at least minimize the trends. There have been a number of efforts in the housing field-scattered siting of low income projects, subsidization of low income families in middle income apartments and projects, and developmental mixed-income housing --indicating that some reversals of policies are possible. A portion of the Negro community's perhaps understandable disenchantment with integration, however, might make many city officials unwilling to incur the political risks of pressing too vigorously for it.

Prospects for school desegregation are not completely lacking either. Parts of the Bronx and Brooklyn and much of Queens present at least the physical possibility. Much depends on how willing the Board of Education will be to make radical or even just modest departures from tradition in zoning and site location. If the Board were willing to embark on a program of interborough transfers, and if it were willing to build educational complexes and parks that drew pupils from wider areas, some desegregation could be effected. Even Manhattan, with the exception of parts of Central Harlem, might be included in such plans. Complexes and parks would not necessarily require all new buildings. Many existing facilities could be used. Most important, complexes and parks could be among the main vehicles through which interborough transfers were effected. The administrative and political obstacles -- securing support and pressure for such innovations -- would of course be substantial. There has not yet been any broad-based community pressure for these changes. A coalition would have to be formed before the Board was willing to move ahead. The Board might well play a role in such an enterprise by legitimating the concepts and engaging in a process of community education and persuasion. The rewards to the Board could be significant, if it linked the idea of complexes and parks to community demands for decentralization and greater control.

Short of such changes, the Board might at least develop zoning and school construction plans on area-wide rather than local community bases, gradually attuning the community to the idea of sending middle and high school children to schools outside. This might enable the Board to develop plans that ran counter to the segregated housing pattern. There has been little move in such a direction thus far.

Again, the politics of the situation and administrative constraints within the school system militate against desegregation. School officials and many parent groups are opposed. The main question is one of why they have been so opposed. What do they perceive as the rewards of maintaining the status quo and as the costs of desegregation? And how do they go about influencing city officials' decisions? I will deal with these issues in the remaining chapters.

Chapter Four

THE "NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL" OPPOSITION

One of the most significant obstacles to school desegregation in New York City has been a loosely joined coalition of powerful professional groups inside the school system (teachers, principals, field superintendents, divisional heads, key headquarters staff personnel); local parent associations, homeowner, taxpayer, and civic groups; and many public and private real estate interests. The "neighborhood school" concept, propounded almost three generations ago by the education profession so as to develop organizational forms especially appropriate for urban school systems, became the clarion call around which a variety of such status quo oriented interests united.

The concept was originally developed to counter the impersonality of relationships in urban centers. Local, neighborhood schools became multipurpose institutions, and many of them became community centers. Furthermore, the schools contributed to the process of assimilation and provided a sense of identity for a wide variety of newly arrived ethnic groups who settled in homogeneous residential enclaves within the city. Separate neighborhoods developed in Manhattan and outlying boroughs -- the Lower East Side, Yorkville, Inwood, Brownsville, Maspeth, Ridgewood, Glendale, Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, Flatbush -- each with its own distinctive ethnic identity and traditions.

The neighborhood school was an integral part of these settlements. In some instances, buildings within particular neighborhoods had a common style of architecture, and this was often reflected in the schools. High schools especially became a focus of enduring loyalties and traditions.

The neighborhood school thus gave each ethnic group migrating to the city its own sense of identity. It also became the vehicle through which a middle class teaching and supervisory staff assimilated a first generation to the values and traditions of the nation, at least as these educators interpreted such traditions.

While the public school was supposed to be the great levelling institution, training diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the virtues of democracy and quality, the structure and pupil composition of neighborhood schools limited the mixing of pupils from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds. Yet, the neighborhood school was the "gateway" into fullfledged citizenship and participation in American society. It was often the single most important acculturation institution. In fact, in many instances it was the first place where the youngster of immigrant parents heard English spoken.

The neighborhood school, then, represented a kind of accommodation of public education, especially in large municipalities, to patterns of residential settlement. It was assumed to serve a wide variety of needs and functions: Providing a sense of identity and community for newly arrived ethnic groups; close school-community relations and increased parent participation in school affairs; safety and security for children; economies, in the sense that transportation costs would be minimal; and a maintenance of high-quality education.[1]

The neighborhood school was further justified on grounds that a closeness of relations between school and community would automatically follow if schools were located close to home. Parents and school officials would come together more readily if the school were easily accessible. They would develop deeper and more enduring relations if both were residents of the local neighborhood. Parents would participate more in school affairs (PTAs, consultation with teachers and other staff), and teachers and principals would have more of an understanding of the culture of the parents. Further, since school friends lived in the area, pupils would have a more integrated social experience as the school became a center of social and recreational activity on a scale that would not be possible if it were located some distance from home.

Another assumed benefit of the neighborhood school was that it minimized the transportation problem, a point that white parent groups who oppose nonvoluntary desegregation plans always make in their resistance to "busing." Their arguments that travel time is minimized under a neighborhood school arrangement -- avoiding fatigue for young children, providing optimum safety and psychological security, with children going to school in nearby and familiar surroundings knowing that their mothers are easily accessible in the event of illness or emergency -- all have had a strong appeal to many educators as well. Related to these points is the economy argument, that it is much more important to spend limited school monies (and a condition of scarcity is always assumed) on salaries, buildings, books and other school facilities that will improve the quality of services than on transportation.

Basic to all these arguments is the notion that the neighborhood school provides for a much higher quality of education, all other things being equal, than a school that draws on pupils from a wider area.

According to this basic notion, as more money is available for improving classroom teaching and school programs (rather than busing), as school officials and parents develop a closer relationship, and as pupils have the continuity of instruction that is facilitated when schools at every level are located in the same local neighborhood, so does the quality of educational services supposedly remain high.

A final argument supporting the neighborhood school concept is that it is much easier to maintain small schools and more personal, informal relationships between the school and the community on that basis than in a consolidated system where schools service pupils from a very wide area. Many educators have a mystique about the assumed benefits of small, local schools, even if it isn't borne out by empirical studies.

This is not the place to review all the relevant research that tests some of the assumptions regarding the benefits of the neighborhood school. There is such a literature, however, and much of it does, indeed, call into question the neighborhood school concept.[2] For example, the physical distance of schools from homes is not the major factor determining the extent of parent participation in school affairs. Such other considerations as the extent of receptivity of local school officials, and the racial and social class composition of school parent populations account for much more variation than the location of the school.

On a more abstract and theoretical level, there are numerous commentaries by urban planners and social scientists on the many advantages of school consolidation (in the form of educational complexes and parks) over fragmented neighborhood schools. Indeed, a voluminous literature has accumulated on the administrative, economic, and educational quality, and the desegregative benefits of school consolidation in large cities.[3] Much of the discussion is based on logic and argument by analogy -- using consolidated rural schools as a model -- since there aren't that many examples of educational complexes and parks from which to derive any generalizations. Nevertheless, even the unvalidated arguments supporting consolidation and sharply condemning the neighborhood school are quite compelling on their face. The New York City Board of Education still shows little sign either of having become familiar with them, or of taking them seriously enough to want to try them out. Thus the Board itself is in the forefront of the neighborhood school coalition. The neighborhood school concept still dominates its thinking.

This becomes quite clear when one examines a number of Board policies. School construction and zoning are perhaps the most apt examples. I mentioned earlier the Board's consistent failures to implement its advanced policy statements on construction and zoning. To this day, it remains reluctant to do so.

A direct confrontation of civil rights leaders with Board officials in 1964 on the construction issue indicated how firmly wedded the Board was to the neighborhood school concept.[4] Dr. Adrian Blumenfeld, director of the school planning and research unit, told protesting civil rights leaders time and again that he only followed Board policy which was "to build the schools where the children are." He and the lay Board refused to re-evaluate their construction program and modify it to effect more desegregation.

A recent example of the Board's unwillingness to change is its location of middle schools. A major recommendation of the Allen Report was that middle schools be located in fringe areas.[5] The Board's most recent policy statement on desegregation, issued in April 1965, indicated an intent to do so, "where practicable."[6] It has not been implemented. The Board is even building four-year middle schools at only 1800 pupil capacity, the same size as its old three-year junior highs. This obliges them to draw students from a local population base and further helps defeat the desegregative purpose of the middle schools -- objectives indicated in the Allen Report and in the Board's own policy statements.

The Board defends these actions with two kinds of arguments. One is that it has a responsibility as a public agency to respond to its various constituencies. The weight of public opinion must of necessity shape many of its decisions. Top officials state that they very much regret the fact that there has not been much concerted grassroots pressure and support for fringe area construction and rezoning. They are telling only part of the story, however. Civil rights pressures to build and zone for desegregation reached their peak in 1964 and early 1965. They have eased up since then, as it became increasingly clear that the Board would not change its practices, regardless of how its policy statements read. Many school officials have welcomed such an easing of pressures. They now justify following neighborhood traditions by pointing to the absence of demands for doing otherwise. Their own inaction has much to do with this.

The Board's second argument is that fringe areas change too rapidly for construction there to have any lasting desegregative effects.[7] Fringe areas are often defined as transitional areas that will become predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican by the time schools are built. This is true in many instances, but the process is not that inevitable and deterministic. Sometimes there is a self-fulfilling prophecy involved, with the Board's policies affecting demographic trends.

There is thus an interaction between the Board's zoning and construction policies and demographic trends. The policies help accelerate the very demographic changes the Board claims prevent prospects for desegregation. The lay Board as a whole does not see this. While one of its members has been persistent in his attempts to push through more fringe area construction, he has been consistently overruled by his eight colleagues and most of the top professional staff.

The neighborhood school concept is actually much clearer and simpler when stated as a slogan to prevent desegregation than in its application. Notions as to what constitutes a functioning "neighborhood" in a social and ecological sense are quite inconsistent as the concept is applied in particular areas. Neighborhoods are frequently defined to maintain the class, racial, and ethnic homogeneity of pupil populations. This often results, even in New York City, in deliberate gerrymandering as school officials succumb to real estate and white parent pressures to do so.

It is necessary to go one step beyond the Board's arguments as to what forces it to refrain from rezoning and fringe area construction for desegregation. This step involves an analysis of the positions taken on such matters by the Board's many constituencies and of the ways in which the Board relates to such constituencies. Such an analysis involves essentially political matters. They bear on the issue of how much freedom of action the Board has to depart significantly from the neighborhood school tradition. Were the constraints the Board faced of such a nature as to have limited its options to depart from tradition any more than it did? Or did it have more freedom of action than it cared to exercise?

One side of the coin, then, is the pressures the Board has faced from civic, real estate, and school official groups. All these interests have made various demands on the Board. Sometimes the demands are conflicting, as between civil rights and neighborhood school groups. The Board has to formulate plans and resolutions to site location and zoning controversies in the context of such demands. Its plans are shaped by conceptions of what will be politically acceptable to as large a segment as possible of its various publics. This is not to say that educational criteria don't play any role at all in shaping the Board's decisions, but rather to suggest that the "politics" of the situation are very important.

The other side of the coin is the effect of the Board's deliberations and strategies of relating to such pressure groups on the latter's demands. The ways in which the Board consults with various groups and negotiates for acceptance of particular plans have an independent effect on interest group pressures. So does the extent and nature of its communications via the mass media regarding its plans, the timing and nature of public hearings and private meetings, and the final timing of its decisions. Pressure group demands and protests are conditioned by the way the Board handles these controversies as well as by group interests.

The Board affects public opinion, then, regardless of what it does. Even when it plays a seemingly passive role, delaying in making decisions on controversial desegregation plans, this may have a profound effect on the positions and strategies of reform and status quo groups. It may even affect political alignments within various coalitions. The Board's argument that interest group pressures beyond its control are preventing it from mandating changes needs to be subjected to close examination. Interest group pressures are in varying degrees a product of Board actions and inactions, even if that is not their only source.

Civic Groups: Parents and Taxpayers (PAT), Parents and Citizens (PAC), Joint Council for Better Education

There had never been any organized neighborhood school movement in New York City opposing school desegregation, at least not until the controversy over the desegregation became intensified in late 1963. The Board's plans were quite limited, never going beyond the principle of voluntary pupil transfers. Since even these modest plans had never been implemented, there was no need for an anti-integration movement to form.

Conditions changed in 1963, as New York City moved into a new phase in the school desegregation struggle. Voluntary open enrollment plans were increasingly viewed as having limited effect on desegregation, and new nonvoluntary transfer plans began to be discussed, both at the Board and among some civic groups, as perhaps a more appropriate desegregation strategy.

Two developments in the late spring of 1963 contributed to this change. One was State Education Commissioner James Allen's request in May that the New York City Board of Education, along with all other school boards throughout the state that served Negro student populations, report on the extent of "racial balance" in their schools (defined as a 50-50 distribution of white and minority group pupils) and on their plans for redressing imbalance where it existed.[8]

The other development was the disenchantment of civil rights groups with open enrollment and the subsequent gathering of all civil rights organizations into a potentially powerful coalition, the City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools, which demanded a citywide desegregation plan.[9] The increased militancy and strength of the civil rights movement on a national scale gave impetus to this development. So did a very forthright and progressive policy statement by the lay Board in June 1963, applauding President Kennedy for his increased efforts on behalf of civil rights and announcing it was going ahead with new plans on its own for desegregation.[10]

A sense of expectation and of hope for the civil rights cause was thus in the air. Many Negro and white integrationists were hopeful that some advances on the school desegregation front might now be possible in a liberal town like New York City.

A catalytic event that marked the inception of the opposition movement and the beginning of the end for the emerging school desegregation coalition almost before it was formed, was the announcement in September 1963 of a possible Princeton Plan pairing of a predominantly while elementary school in the Jackson Heights area of Queens (PS 149) with a segregated

Negro school in nearby Corona (PS 92). The idea for the pairing was developed by some liberal white parents on the executive committee of the PS 149 parent association, in collaboration with some top officials of the United Parents Association. The plan would never have been announced publicly so early in its development but for a leak to the N.Y. Herald Tribune.[11]

PS 149 and 92 finally were paired, but only after spawning a controversy that shook the entire city, contributed to the development of a powerful opposition coalition, and effectively discouraged the Board of Education and top city officials from ever entertaining any significant plans for school desegregation in the future.

As soon as word got out of the possible pairing, a sizable number of lower- and lower-middle-class Jackson Heights parents, most of them residing in one large cooperative apartment house, and with children in PS 149, protested that the parent association leaders had developed this plan over the summer without consulting the community. The parents objected strongly to the pairing idea, despite the fact that the schools were only six blocks apart, and despite an informal promise by the Board of Education that both schools would get many additional services. PS 149 was a very mediocre school and had continually been denied extra needed staff and services in recent years, on understandable grounds that other schools in ghetto areas had a much greater need. Some white parents claimed that the plan was an infringement of their constitutional rights, and that the Board of Education had no legal right to forcibly transfer their children away from their local neighborhood school. The battle was then joined. The community immediately became polarized into pro and anti pairing groups, the neighborhood school movement emerged, and the conflict expanded and mushroomed to draw in parents and communities from all over the city.[12] Only Staten Island, which still had few Negroes in its public schools, and to a lesser degree, some parts of Manhattan, which had few whites left, were relatively uninvolved in the struggle. Even at that, some councilmen and legislators from Staten Island did enter the struggle by pressing for anti-busing legislation. And many areas of Manhattan -- Washington Heights-Inwood, Harlem, East Harlem, Yorkville, and Lincoln Center -- did become sites of desegregation plans and controversies.

Parents and Taxpayers (PAT) was formed a few days after the announcement of the pairing, in the rumpus room of the Jackson Heights housing cooperative where most of the white parents with children in PS 149 resided. They decided that the only way they could fight the Princeton Plan was to organize on a federated basis in local communities throughout the city. Many feared that the Board of Education might try to institute pairings on a citywide basis.

The people who emerged as leaders were adept at dramatizing that possibility and feeding the anxieties and near-hysteria that were starting to develop in many white communities. In the almost complete absence of any definitive statements from the Board of Education as to just what its intentions might be, an important factor contributing to the strength of the movement, it was relatively easy for a hard core of activists and a few leaders to quickly mobilize a large following.[13]

The press also helped dramatize the situation as it focused on the so-called "busing" issue, even though the superintendent and lay Board had no immediate plans for the mandatory busing of children. The Board's own internal division led to its failure to speak out on the matter. The uncertainty and confusion that followed further reinforced parent fears and helped the movement to pick up a large following and additional support. Even Robert Kennedy, campaigning for senator in 1964, felt compelled to come out against busing.[14]

The way in which what should have been a "non-issue" was allowed to snowball and become the focus of so much community controversy and tension is an important part of the story of the opposition's success. It highlights a number of general points about the Board of Education's strategies for handling innovations and for mobilizing support from its own staff and community groups to implement them. In this instance, as in so many others, the cumbersome bureaucratic machinery of the Board and the marked ineptness of the lay Board and top headquarters staff in handling the community and its own middle- and lower-level officials, prevented a broader acceptance of the pairing plan as policy and hampered the implementation of the plan at those few sites where it finally was put into effect.

Socioeconomic Status, Mobility Experiences, Values, Life Styles

As soon as word got out in September 1963 that the Board of Education might indeed pair PS 149 and 92 and perhaps other schools (though information on the possible latter pairings was never corroborated by the Board until many months later), Parents and Taxpayers formed a citywide coordinating council. The communities and neighborhoods represented in the coordinating council at this early state, and later in the separate Bronx and Brooklyn organizations, were invariably those where a homeowning, a lower- and lower-middle-class, second generation, white population predominated. They were also fringe areas, or those with an expanding Negro population in neighboring communities, and many were sites where school desegregation plans were rumored to be in the offing in the near future. They included Canarsie, Flatbush and East Flatbush, Bay Ridge, Sheepshead Bay, and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn; Ridgewood, Glendale, Maspeth, Hollis, Middle Village, the Rockaways, Rockwood Park, Woodside, Astoria, Jackson Heights, Bergen Basin, and Howard Beach in Queens; and Washington Heights-Inwood in Manhattan.

Since the political alignments in Jackson Heights were so prototypic of what they were elsewhere in the city, and since the course of the controversy there is relevant as a model for interpreting what went on elsewhere, that single case deserves special attention.

Two main coalitions emerged in the Jackson Heights pairing controversy. They soon became so polarized, and the pressure to take sides was so intense in the single housing cooperative where most of the white contestants resided, that it was difficult for any viable moderate group to form and mediate between the two parties.

One explanation for the intense degree of response to the pairing in Jackson Heights, as in other areas, is to be found in the differences in the social background, present life situation and outlook of the white population affected.[15] Jackson Heights had a large lower-middle-class homeowner population, and they were among the most committed followers of PAT. In occupation, education, and income they belong at the lower margins of the middle class. Many such homeowners are clerical workers, salesmen, or small businessmen, with little to differentiate them from blue-collar workers except their occupational status and residential area. They are an upwardly mobile group, having moved out to Jackson Heights and similar communities in many instances from ethnic ghetto areas closer to the central city. Some had moved out from the Bronx, others from parts of Manhattan or Brooklyn. In many cases, their upward mobility was more residential than occupational or a matter of income. They had moved from overcrowded apartment dwellings in densely populated central city districts to single- and two-family homes or co-ops in more suburban outlying areas. The young, lower-middle-class white population of Canarsie in East Brooklyn is a similar group. They had moved in from neighboring East Flatbush and Brownsville to get away from slums, crowded schools and living conditions, and they interpreted any attempt to desegregate what they considered almost their own "private" schools as a threat to all the gains they felt they had made by moving out.

At this time in their life histories, many feel they cannot easily afford the cost of another change in residence. Furthermore, their limited occupational skills and education probably preclude further occupational mobility. Many have strong primary group ties in the local area and probably intend to remain where they are. They often threaten the Board of Education that they will move out in large numbers, but much of this is only threat. Finally, they are in a most vulnerable position in the sense that many cannot afford to send their children to private schools, which are looked on with some scorn in this population group anyway. Some have sent their children to parochial schools, and there are some sections in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn where Jewish families have tried to get together to open their own religious schools. It isn't religious education that many of them want. It is a chance to be freed from having to send their children to what they see as low quality schools with many lower class Negro and Puerto Rican pupils.

There are actually at least two main "social types" among the opposition white parent groups in these fringe areas. One is the new residents I have just described. The other is a sizable group of oldtimers who may well have lived in their present neighborhood for many years. They now have children of school age and fear that the schools and neighborhood will be overrun by lower class Negroes. The thought of having to send their children to integrated fringe area schools panics them as much as it does the newcomers. Many of them nourish fantasies about some past "golden age" in the 1930's and '40's when their communities had few Negroes and Puerto Ricans and when the city did not have a "race problem." Both these "social types" are somewhat similar in class and ethnic characteristics, though the latter may be of slightly higher socioeconomic status and come more frequently from middle class backgrounds.

Both types can be contrasted with the supporters of such integrationist groups as the Citizens' Committee for Better Schools in Jackson Heights. These people are much more middle- and upper-middle class and more highly educated than most PAT followers. In Jackson Heights, for example, the basic split was between a "college" and "noncollege" group. The two groups had never had a great deal of social contact before the pairing controversy and obviously had much less afterward.[16]

This upper-middle-class, liberal group is much more cosmopolitan than the PAT followers. Their range of social contacts is broader than that of neighborhood school people, who are primarily locals. Their cosmopolitan nature was reflected in the fact that many of them only resided in Jackson Heights or similar communities as an interim move, before moving out to Connecticut or Westchester suburbs. They are much more upwardly mobile than PAT followers who have risen (occupationally and in income) about as far as they can go. One of the things that PAT followers most resented in Jackson Heights was that the pairing was pushed by the group that clearly intended to leave the neighborhood in the next few years. This reflected a generalized resentment throughout the city on the part of neighborhood school advocates that upper-middle-class "white liberals" had placed them on the firing line while sending their own children to private schools or while planning to move out. Many leaders in the school desegregation movement had their children in private schools.

The lower-middle-class PAT group had thus experienced a particular kind of mobility that contributed to their rejection of any nonvoluntary school desegregation plans. They migrated to Jackson Heights and other outlying areas from ethnic ghettos that experienced considerable neighborhood decay and invasions from lower class nonwhites. They felt that by "moving up" to semisuburban areas they could escape the hardships of central city slum conditions and enjoy such middle class amenities as homeownership, uncrowded and "good" schools, and safer living conditions.

Furthermore, many are members of ethnic minorities, Irish and Italian Catholic, Armenian, and East European Jews. They are acutely conscious of how they, as ethnic minorities, have been able to "work their way" out of poverty and slums, having come up "the hard way," without, as they see it, artificial props and government support. It seems more than reasonable to them to say that since they have improved themselves through "self-help," why can't the Negro? Why don't Negroes do more to help themselves instead of always expecting the government or some school officials to boost them up the social ladder?

In sum, a cluster of social background characteristics pushed a large segment of New York City's white population into support for the neighborhood school movement and strong opposition against nonvoluntary school desegregation plans. Those local communities with a predominance of lower- and lower-middle-class, second generation, minority ethnic populations, recently migrated from slum areas, and with roots and most friendship ties in the neighborhood, usually were areas where PAT and similar groups were strongest.

The background characteristics and experiences I have just mentioned are frequently associated with a number of social outlooks -- an intolerance of "outgroups," a tendency toward stereotyping, a rigid moralism conducive to seeing the world in terms of "good guys and bad guys," an exaggerated preoccupation with status, and a limited cultural sophistication, awareness, and tolerance of alternative values.[17]

More generally, the neighborhood school movement may be interpretated in large part as a form of what has been called "status politics."[18]

Neighborhood school advocates are concerned about their ambiguous status and are anxious about the prospect of becoming a déclassé group. On economic grounds, many of these whites, as homeowners, are concerned about declining property values if Negroes move into their area. They believe this will contribute to a general deterioration of living conditions. Ultimately, many may be vitally concerned about their jobs and about competition from Negroes in a rapidly automating economy. On prestige grounds, they want to preserve hard-won status advantages and maintain the respectability of their local area. They are also concerned about keeping the community free from control by Negro pressure groups and politicians. Finally, on social and educational grounds, they are concerned about the upward mobility and occupational achievement of their children, which they see as threatened by forced desegregation and, they reason, a consequent decline in quality of education.

They have a kind of scarcity psychology that informs and underlies all these fears. They assume that there is a fixed quantum of rights, rewards, power, and opportunities and that if the Negro gets a larger slice of the pie, whites will get less. This is what the civil rights movement means to many of them, and they are unwilling to tolerate demands for school desegregation because of such views.

This basic difference in outlook and politics between the lower and higher status whites I have described has much to do with variations in the degree of receptivity of white communities to desegregation plans. It was reflected in the pairing controversies. In Brooklyn Heights, for example, the site of one pairing, Parents and Taxpayers could not mobilize much local support. Neither could any other neighborhood school group. There were some parents who opposed the pairing, and there were some real estate interests who opposed it strongly. They were overruled, however, by most white parents and civic leaders. Brooklyn Heights is a prototype of the college-educated, upper-middle-class, white community. This is not to say that the Brooklyn Heights pairing went particularly well. It faced many of the problems of staff sabotage and Board ineptness in planning that I have already referred to. I am only suggesting here that one important set of factors affecting the degree of success and effectiveness in the implementation of such innovations as desegregation plans was favorable in this instance.

The same pattern held for Lincoln Center, the site of another pairing. Parents and Taxpayers leaders tried to organize white parents there, but were similarly unsuccessful. An opposition group did form the West Side Parents League, but they were unable to exert much influence in the community, and the pairing went through. Eight of the nine local school board members voted for it. The tone of this Upper West Side neighborhood was set by its upper-middle-class, Reform Democrat, predominantly Jewish, professional population. They had moved into positions of leadership in the area, and though some were denounced by certain moderates as being too militant, they carried the community on the pairing issue.

Yet, it is important to keep some perspective on how generally receptive to school desegregation even this white liberal group was. They did not always respond as favorably as they did in Jackson Heights, Brooklyn Heights, and Lincoln Center. For example, there was a rumor in early 1964 that PS 84, a predominantly white elementary school on Manhattan's Upper West Side (West 92nd Street, near Central Park West), would be paired with a nearby segregated Negro and Puerto Rican school. Many West Side Reform Democrats from the FDR Club called an emergency meeting. Some got quite hysterical, and they organized to beat down the possible pairing. As one disappointed member of the white community and of the club stated: "All their old liberalism went by the boards. They are liberal in the abstract and when the problem is far away, say in Selma, Jackson, or Birmingham, but not for their children of their schools and neighborhoods."[19]

It is, then, really a question of degree. There are these class differences within the white community, with college-educated, upper-middle-class liberals expressing themselves more frequently in favor of integration. But they, in turn, are divided, and some in their ranks are less than enthusiastic about school desegregation. However, I believe that even the ones who would initially oppose such plans as pairings, like the people in PS 84, could be brought around to accepting more desegregation, if the Board of Education gave more indication that it would make greater efforts at achieving high quality in schools slated to be desegregated, and if the community didn't first come to hear about proposed plans through rumor and press leaks.

Real Estate Interests

The neighborhood school movement consists of more than just citizen and parent groups. Pressures on the Board of Education to maintain segregated schools come from various real estate interests as well. Though not oriented directly toward educational matters, private developers, local homeowner groups, slum landlords, and even city housing agencies, acting either in their perceived economic interests, in those of their tenants, or in accordance with housing codes, tend to perpetuate and expand a segregated housing pattern. They may also exert direct influence on the Board of Education, often through the district superintendent, but on headquarters officials as well, to build schools and zone to preserve homogeneous student populations.[20]

The housing politics of Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx are replete with examples of the successes of local homeowner groups in white, middle class areas in keeping low income housing projects out of their neighborhoods. They often ally with private developers who have the resources and experience to know where and how to exert political pressure on appropriate city officials. The borough president's office is certainly one center for such pressures. Historically, the borough presidents of the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn have all been in close contact with major developer and homeowner interests. They have often owed their election to such interests and are not about to act against them very readily in the service of such idealistic and lofty goals as housing and school desegregation.

The objections to low income housing projects in white, middle class areas are based in large part on private economic interests. There are the usual fears that low income projects will be the "entering wedge" for more public housing, leading to the ultimate depression of real estate values. Often, large real estate interests -- for example, brokers and developers -- feed the fears that one project will be followed by many others. Private developers see little profit in desegregation. Neither do many elected public officials see much political gain in it, faced as they are by developers, homeowners associations, banks, local merchants, tenants, and related groups as among their most important constituents.

Local Social Structure, Patterns of Political Participation

There is another set of factors, besides the class, ethnic, and economic interests of the citizenry, which has contributed to the strength of the neighborhood school movement, namely the strong sense of alienation and powerlessness of many citizen groups throughout the city at being unable to reach school officials or participate in school decisions. This is a sentiment that applies equally to the Negro and Puerto Rican populations as well as the lower- and lower-middle-class whites in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. The recent Black Power movement and demands for greater local participation in the running of schools in ghetto areas are perfect examples of such feelings. In some important respects, the ghetto and lower-middle-class white populations have much in common.

While there is some variation from one local community to another, a rather generalized pattern throughout the city is that parents and other interested citizens have few, if any, channels of access to the Board of Education. They face a large, amorphous, distant bureaucracy that has had little concern for being accountable or responsive to citizen demands. Many parents with legitimate complaints have no place to take them. Their local school boards are powerless. The principal and district superintendent often pass the buck to headquarters. Headquarters officials, in turn, often pass it on to their colleagues there or back down to the field. PAs and PTAs are sometimes of help, but there are many ghetto and white parents whom they don't reach.

In short, despite the continued existence of the neighborhood school, there is no sense of community or of meaningful school-community relations in New York City. Many parents feel they are dealing with a faceless and impersonal bureaucracy. The schools have not been responsive and accountable to the public.

This is the sociopolitical setting in which the neighborhood school movement developed. The setting approximates in many important respects a condition of "the mass society," as discussed in contemporary sociological writing.[21] There is an almost complete absence of intermediate community organizations between the citizenry and the city government. Mayor Wagner set up a number of community planning boards throughout the city in the late 1950's; and the Board of Education set up local school boards in 1960, supposedly strengthening them in 1962. Neither institution played any significant role in easing the fears and anxieties of white parents over the school desegregation issue.

The attitudes and values of the lower-middle class who contributed so many followers to the neighborhood school movement were not in the direction of "community participation." Typical of many lower-middle class, homeowner groups, they lived in more private worlds, experimenting with their new leisure in a family-oriented way and avoiding community organizations; orienting themselves toward evenings, weekends, and vacations which they spent with their families; looking at television; visiting friends and kin; cultivating their gardens; pursuing personal hobbies and do-it-yourself activities; or participating in sports.[22]

Thus, in the lower-middle-class areas of the city which are the centers of the neighborhood school movement, a sociopolitical vacuum exists, reminiscent of the Mannheim, Ortega y Gasset image of the alienated, powerless, and privatized citizen, adrift in a mass society where power is increasingly centralized in a few hands.[23] As the pairing controversy developed, these people experienced a deep sense of anomie or shattered expectations. As they saw it, there was no longer any close relationship between expected and actual conditions in their communities. Many felt they had done so many of the "right" things for which society is supposed to reward people -- working long hours, saving enough money to move into a respectable neighborhood, buying their own home, and establishing residence near a supposedly good school. Suddenly it seemed to them that many of these rewards were being taken away or becoming attenuated by city officials as a result of social forces such local residents could neither understand nor control. The many placards they carried in boycotts and marches on city hall, calling attention to "socialist and communist schemes" concocted by city officials, the mayor's "irresponsibility" in letting Negro groups push through desegregation plans, and calling for an end to "grand timetables to integrate the schools," attest to the resentments of this group.

Thus, the absence of independent, intermediate groups as a buffer for these local citizens appears related to their strong and organized opposition to nonvoluntary desegregation plans. If they had been able to express their interests and grievances through such organizations, they would have had a built-in safety valve for "bleeding off" their fears and sense of alienation. It is likely that their resistance would have been tempered and that they might have developed a stake in improving the public schools for all children, as they met other groups, heard other points of view, and had some of their questions answered.

Local Residential Patterns, Ecological Arrangements

In the city as a whole, the federated organizations in the neighborhood school movement were able to mobilize support from already existing taxpayers, homeowners, neighborhood improvement, and similar civic organizations. This is not to say that there were high levels of grassroots participation in these groups. They would only come together to fight particular battles, as concrete issues developed that affected their communities -- zoning, prospects of low income housing projects locating there, site location controversies on schools, taxes, neighborhood renewal, and the like. Between fights on these issues, they had a limited existence and *raison d'etre*, except as a very small cadre of activists would keep the organizations going.

There were already existing civic organizations that formed the nucleus for all the federated neighborhood school opposition groups. Indeed, they became the constituent organizations of PAC and PAT. A listing of some of the organizations forming the citywide coordinating council for PAT at its inception (October 3, 1963) included, for example: the Community Council of Rockaway, the Flatbush Park Civic Association, Bergen Basin Civic Association, Rockwood Park Civic Association, Howard Beach Civic Association, East Flatbush Civic Association, Bay Ridge Civic Association, the Washington Heights PTA, Malverne Taxpayers and Parents, and PAT of Ridgewood-Glendale, Woodside, Middle Village, Maspeth, and Jackson Heights.

The point about pre-existing groups has great relevance for understanding the relative strength of civil rights and neighborhood school organizations. The ghetto areas did not have the pre-existing civic organizational structures that white areas had. There were some local church and civil rights groups -- NAACP and CORE branches, block associations, and some community organizations. But generally, the civil rights movement suffered under the handicap of having a more atomized population from which to organize. Its leadership was never quite able to bring about integral organizational action. (These problems will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.) One of the political lessons many of them learned from the experience was that they had to congregate before they could integrate. Winning an integration fight meant first mobilizing a strong grassroots as well as citywide organization. They couldn't do that until they had some already functioning grassroots groups to begin with.

The neighborhood school movement did not face this problem.

Tactics and Strategy

The neighborhood school opposition movement went through at least two stages in its political activity. Initially, they engaged in public protests and direct action tactics, including demonstrations, boycotts, mass meetings, leaflet campaigns, and the like. After the pairing controversy died down, in the early months of 1965, when it became clearer that the Board of Education would probably not try any more pairings, they consciously adopted a different strategy. While they had always operated in "private" as well as through "public" demonstrations, they began to devote much more of their energies to the former strategy. The change became pronounced at the time of the mayoralty election campaign in the late summer and fall of 1965. Neighborhood school partisans carried on an active campaign, supporting candidates favorable to their cause. The change in emphasis in their strategy was dictated in part by the Board's inactions. As long as the Board kept indicating that it was not about to implement its policy statements on desegregation, there was no need for public protests and demonstrations. Opposition leaders couldn't have drawn many protesters anyway. People only tended to demonstrate around particular issues and plans.

This is not to say, however, that neighborhood school groups couldn't draw demonstrators when an issue arose. They proved that they were very capable of doing so, for example, in late June of 1965 at a Board of Education hearing on its proposed decentralization plans. Some groups in the Bronx had been led to believe that the Board was redrawing district lines. Their leadership was able to whip up a large demonstration at Board headquarters. More than one hundred parents showed up and picketed the hearing for several hours. They convinced the Board that they could still draw a big following when a particularly sensitive issue arose.[24]

Again, a two-day boycott in September 1965, accounting for 27 per cent absentees the first day and 23 per cent the second, also impressed Board and city officials.[25] Both these displays made the point that neighborhood school advocates wanted to make, and they haven't had to resort to such tactics again.

In any event, their most vigorous activity over the past couple of years had been one of lobbying in Albany for passage of legislation that would prevent the Board of Education from ever busing pupils for purposes of securing greater ethnic balance. PAT has a paid lobbyist in Albany, working to get a neighborhood school bill through the legislature and to block any legislation that might further increase the powers of the Board to desegregate.[26] He works in alliance with a board-based coalition of conservative legislators from hard core opposition areas in New York City, from many communities on Long Island (Malverne, Freeport), and from many upstate areas. The mere presence of such a coalition and the threat of passage of one or another of their dozens of "neighborhood school" bills, has placed constraints on the State Education Department's willingness and ability to intervene in local situations. Commissioner James Allen always functions in a political context that includes the threat of passage of one of these bills. One of his standard responses to queries from civil rights leaders in New York City to intervene and press the Board of Education to implement his commission's recommendations is that he is concerned about the possibility of passage of one of these bills if he shows signs of exercising too much authority in local situations.

Another tactic the neighborhood school movement has followed has been to press for an elected board. They have pressed the mayor and state officials to change the procedures for selecting members of the lay Board, but with no more success than their efforts to secure passage of a neighborhood school bill. They are continuing this battle.

One reason for their lack of success on these two matters has been the intervention of moderate organizations, especially PEA (Public Education Association) and UPA (United Parents Association), to prevent legislative action. Though none of the moderates has pressed the Board of Education to move ahead on a desegregation program (indeed, they have pressed it to establish other priorities), they have held the line on these legislative issues. Top PEA officials especially feel that to have an elected board would open the way to much more outside political interference in the running of the school system and would contribute to a decline of professionalism, as decisions would have to be made solely on the basis of outside political pressure.

Neighborhood school groups work informally on nonlegal matters as well. They are in constant communication with Board officials and politicians at every level. They continue to be more organized and more effective than civil rights groups in this regard. One councilman from the Brownsville-Canarsie area of East Brooklyn recounted to us how the largest percentage of communications to him regarding such school desegregation plans as pairings and educational parks came from PAT and its affiliated organizations rather than from civil right leaders. Local civil rights groups were not as mobilized at the grassroots nor were they as unified. In the early stages of the pairing controversy (1963-early 1964), some civil rights leaders thought that the virtues of their cause were "self-evident" and that any city officials with a sense of social conscience would automatically back their cause. Those officials who did not were seen as not worth contacting. The civil rights leaders were sometimes quick to develop stereotypes of politicians and city officials and tended to cut off communications after some initial failures. This was especially the case in their relations with many "white liberal" politicians, their potential allies, whom they sometimes lumped together in a category of "sell outs" and the "white power structure." A halo effect set in, whereby one negative experience with such politicians got generalized, and contacting them in the future was seen as a lost cause. Sometimes, the reason for not contacting politicians was that civil rights leaders were absorbed in the problem of trying to develop some kind of unity and consensus within their own ranks. They were concerned that they couldn't make any significant show of strength to politicians until they straightened out that problem.

Meanwhile, PAT leaders were habitually phoning all politicians, especially those whose sentiments were all on the other side. The result was that politicians and other city officials underestimated the potential mass support for desegregation plans and overestimated the strength of PAT and other opposition groups. City officials may well have misperceived the relative strengths and mass support for segregation or desegregation, due partly to the lack of follow through on the part of some civil rights leaders whose resources, unity, and political skills and experience were limited. They often defined their potential "white liberal" allies as chronic enemies. It should be emphasized, however, that civil rights groups have just begun to develop a local leadership, have suffered from extreme shortages of funds and personnel, and have had little experience in negotiating with white politicians. The leadership of neighborhood school opposition groups have had long experience and training in New York City politics, mostly at the local and borough level. Their success was partly a function of this experience.

The opposition did, of course, have a large following. During the period of the white boycotts, for example, PAT leaders and their allies would release estimates of their "membership" to the press. For example, the Joint Council for Better Education, a confederated group of Brooklyn organizations, claimed anywhere between 750,000-900,000 members, while PAT claimed 250,000 or more.[27] These were probably vastly overinflated figures, defining as members anybody who ever gave any money at all to the cause or all people who were nominal members of constituent organizations that were loosely tied into the confederation. Nevertheless, the fact that such groups as PAT, Joint Council, and PAC were

were able to bring out so many demonstrators in marches on city hall and the Board impressed Board and city officials. Civil rights groups were never able to draw large numbers of public demonstrators after the first two boycotts in February and March 1964.

The neighborhood school opposition was able to outmaneuver civil rights groups, then, in the doggedness and effectiveness of their political pressures, and in the mass base they were able to mobilize. They had a further advantage, namely, that their internal divisions and factions never arose over matters so basic and fundamental that the differences would dilute or limit their political strength. Even in the case of a split between PAT and the Joint Council, the two groups were basically agreed on their absolute opposition to any nonvoluntary desegregation plans, even as they disagreed at times over appropriate strategy. Both were federations of local white parent groups, all bent on defending their right to send their children to local schools. They never got caught in the bind that civil rights groups did, of having some of their local parent groups fragment on basic issues and testify at public hearings that they didn't want desegregation but wanted more schools and school space in local neighborhoods. The desegregation cause was hurt immeasurably when CORE, NAACP, and EQUAL leaders would be followed to the podium by more conservative local parent groups from Bedford-Stuyvesant, South Jamaica, Harlem, or other ghetto areas who protested that they wanted more local schools.

One of the strategies that neighborhood school groups have used most successfully has been to infiltrate and take over key positions in parent associations and on local school boards. The moderate United Parents Associations, a citywide confederation of local PAs and PTAs, has lost a number of members and chapters to PAT, PAC, and Joint Council since late 1963. Leaders of Jackson Heights PAT drew up a petition to impeach the leaders and executive committee of the parent association at PS 149, after they had developed plans for the pairing. The UPA was able to beat down that initial challenge, but in a vote conducted in the spring of 1964, most of the PAT candidates were voted into office. The same pattern held for many other areas of Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. UPA's membership declined from an estimated 440,000 to around 400,000 from 1963-1966.[28] Some of the decline resulted from a secession of Negro and Puerto Rican parent groups, but much of it was caused by the emergence of the rightist groups. Equally important, many of the PAs as well as the UPA were forced to take more status quo positions on desegregation and related issues, lest they lose even more local chapters to the neighborhood school opposition.

The selection of local school board members was another area where the neighborhood school coalition gained tremendous power. Local school board members are nominated by a community screening committee and then selected by the citywide board. Over the last two years, many PAT members and their sympathizers have been selected to local board positions. A few integrationists have also been appointed, but the trend is decidedly the other way. It invariably occurs in the same fringe and lower-middle-class white areas where PAT and other neighborhood school groups were so strong.

This pattern of conservative, neighborhood school interests' control over decision-making bodies or civic organizations at the local level extends to community planning boards as well. As I mentioned, Mayor Wagner had set up community planning boards throughout the city in the late 1950's and early '60's to give the citizenry a greater voice in the affairs of their areas. They could recommend to the mayor, the Board of Estimate, and other administrative line agencies in the city, such as the Board of Education, particular innovations or programs for their communities. They could also exercise a negative veto power over other proposals.

In many white, PAT areas, the community planning boards were composed of the same interests as local school boards and parent associations. Members and officers of these agencies were in essence the "local power structure" of some communities, and they constituted in some cases a closely knit and cohesive interlocking directorate. In a few areas, the same people serve on community planning boards and local school boards. Frequently they also turn out to be the most powerful real estate and propertied interests locally, and their decisions clearly reflect such concerns. (Canarsie in Southeast Brooklyn is one such area.)

It is in this broader community sense, then, that the neighborhood school movement has had such an impact on New York City public education. It has taken away local community power from moderate PTA groups and from some more liberal, Reform Democrat, or civil rights groups.

At the same time, the actual extent of PAT, PAC, or Joint Council following is quite indeterminate. As lower- and lower-middle-class populations, the neighborhood school following does not participate regularly in civic affairs. Just as it changed almost overnight from an apathetic population to an activist, mass movement, so did it withdraw from public participation and demonstrations when the Board of Education gave every indication that it did not intend to implement its policy statements on desegregation.

Board of Education Strategies and Opposition Strength

I believe that one can make a strong case for the position that reactivation of opposition neighborhood school groups is not inevitable with the presentation by the Board of Education of numerous educational parks projects in various parts of the city. I base this judgment on observations of the effects of the Board's strategies for handling the pairing controversy, as well as on interviews with top leaders in PAT. One leader who was among the most militant in his opposition to the Jackson Heights pairing suggested: "The Board of Education could easily have mandated many more pairings throughout the city if they had not been so secretive about it. Even the well-organized group here wouldn't have made nearly as much noise if we had been included in discussions earlier and had not had the thing sprung on us so suddenly."[29]

One can readily question the judgment of this activist. Yet the Board of Education's strategies certainly contributed substantially to the fears, anxieties, and near-hysteria of many white parents and consequently to the strength of the neighborhood school movement. This is not to say that the movement wouldn't have emerged regardless of how the Board handled the issue, or that it would have been easy for the Board to have handled it differently. It is only to suggest that, functionally, the Board's actions and inactions, however motivated, were a great source of support for the demagogic leadership of the opposition.

The lay Board's delays, caution, and vacillation did contribute to the fears of white parents.[30] The Board did so by failing to communicate its intentions while at the same time allowing rumors and press leaks to pile up and further fan the anxieties of the citizenry. Parents in areas rumored to be sites of pairings searched around to get further information on what the Board was up to. They received no information from headquarters and none from the district superintendent or local school board. It was this kind of information and leadership vacuum that organizers of the neighborhood school movement thrived on. Parents from Canarsie, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, or the Northeast Bronx would go to local PAT meetings and ask for information. PAT leaders, not having any more knowledge about the Board's intentions than questioning parents, would further intensify their anxieties by suggesting that nobody wanted the Board to bus white children into ghetto schools and Negro areas and shouldn't the community rise up to ensure that this wouldn't happen? Many parents who went through this experience would end up supporting PAT. They had many legitimate fears and questions that were simply not being answered. The Board of Education, by its inactions, permitted this build up of opposition strength.

Then its various officials would point to that very same strength of the opposition and the pressures it exerted on them as a reason for not implementing more pairings. Board officials might well have analyzed more carefully the way in which their own inactions helped build up such pressures.

Many parents had legitimate fears that should have been answered. They wanted to know how far their children might travel, what kind of a school program the children would have in a new setting, what provisions would be made for maintaining standards, and when and how the community would be consulted.

In a very real sense, the neighborhood school movement, like the recent community participation movement in ghetto areas, was an angry response of parents who felt alienated and powerless in the face of an impersonal, overcentralized, and insulated bureaucracy. Their feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and cynicism about the motives of top Board and city officials were made to order for the development of such mass movements.[31] The Board of Education, perhaps more than any other city agency, was capable of spawning such mass protest movements. It was bigger, more centralized, more impersonal, and more insulated from the community and the rest of city government than any of the latter's other agencies.

School Officials

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the Board of Education would have been committed to more school desegregation if only it had not been for external pressures from the neighborhood school movement, real estate interests, and financial institutions. One of the biggest pressures of all against any movement and change came from within the school system itself. School officials at every level, including the superintendent and lay Board considered the neighborhood school principle sacrosanct. While there were policy statements about the importance of desegregation, learning to live in a multiethnic, multiracial society, and the like, one has to discount some of these pronouncements as simple rhetoric and public relations strategy in the light of what the Board actually did.

In theory, the Board seemed committed to desegregation, through such means as fringe area construction, rezoning, educational complexes and parks, and the like. Its advanced policy statements on these matters are all well-known nationally, as I have already noted, and are unquestionably quite impressive in their moral tone and expressions of social conscience, as they repeat over and over again the evils and costs of segregated education. Civil rights groups have gradually come to the conclusion that the policy statements are both a hoax and a substitute for action, as 13 years have gone by with very little implementation. Such judgments must be taken seriously and are more often than not correct. Schools were generally not built in fringe areas, nor was there much zoning for desegregation.[32]

To understand why these advanced policy statements on desegregation were not implemented, one has only to look to the various supervisory levels in the system as well as to a few key top headquarters officials.

District superintendents and principals fought against most desegregation plans and do to this day. Heads of the various divisions at headquarters were also generally opposed.[33] Again, some of them talked as though they were in favor, but their actions suggested otherwise.

The clearest expression of where the supervisory groups stood was a public statement by the Council of Supervisory Associations, the peak organization of supervisors, released to the press in April 1964.[34] They opposed pairings, feeder pattern changes, and the abolishing of group IQ tests. Their stand even appalled the UPA, one of the city's powerful moderate organizations which had been so effective in eliminating 16 of the Board's 20 proposed pairings. The UPA countered with its own press release, referring in dismay to the Council of Supervisory Association's outdated attitudes.[35]

Most supervisors in the New York City school system have been trained in the neighborhood school concept. It is a "way of life" with them. They generally entered the system in the 1930's and 40's, were well along in their careers, were quite authoritarian and militaristic in their attitudes, and have been almost paralyzed at the thought of change. Many have a depression psychology and are afraid of becoming obsolescent if their working conditions change very radically.[36]

The superintendent, lay Board, and some top staff officials had to maneuver and bargain with these organized interests. It was invariably a lost cause, because even if the lay Board and superintendent did finally prevail, community tensions and conflicts had become so magnified with the uncertainty, confusion, and hysteria that inevitably went with the long delays, that it was too late for the Board to do an effective community and public relations job in securing acceptance and support of plans from civic groups. In other words, the Board itself was badly divided on matters of strategy and how much change was appropriate, with all the principals, district superintendents, divisional heads, and many teachers on the side of preserving the status quo. By the time the superintendent and lay Board got through trying to negotiate for their support, it was often much too late to mobilize a consensus around change. The community had ceased to believe in the system's integrity, and this went for most participants in the desegregation struggle.

It wasn't just that the supervisory and headquarters officials were against desegregation and regarded the neighborhood school as sacred. More important, they could engage in constant sabotage and insubordination with relative impunity. And they did. The neighborhood school movement, then, had many friends and supporters within the New York City school system.[37]

One key to understanding the tenacity with which the middle-level supervisors rebelled against desegregation plans is to be found in their social backgrounds and outlook. There was a striking similarity between these school officials, both at headquarters and the field, and white parent populations who opposed desegregation. Many of the arguments against "compulsory" desegregation plans used by teachers, principals, field superintendents, and some headquarters officials, were those used by parents. The school officials came from the same kinds of lower-middle-class and ethnic origins (Irish, Italian, Jewish) and had the same kind of latent and not-so-latent prejudice against lower class minority group children.[38] They resisted any implementation of the Board's desegregation plans with every conceivable strategy they could muster -- both private and public. Their resistance illustrates how insulated public school officials have become in recent years, especially in metropolitan centers experiencing such rapid demographic and social changes. They have acted as though they were still dealing with a predominantly white, middle class clientele, and still training low income populations for jobs that are disappearing in an automating economy.

Thus, the personal and career interests of many public school officials in New York City converged with the interests of status-quo-minded white parents. Headquarters personnel staged heated campaigns, in the press and in private, to forestall nonvoluntary desegregation programs. Desegregation meant a number of changes in their working conditions -- in curriculum, in staffing and training requirements, in ethnic composition of schools and classrooms, and even in grade and divisional organization. Many understandably felt more secure and comfortable following older traditions, even if they were dated. And they were especially enraged with civil rights demands for nonvoluntary desegregation plans, since such plans violated that most "sacred" tradition of all, the neighborhood school.

The Future

All these events of the past few years suggest a number of important lessons for the future. They suggest the importance of involving the community more in school decision-making without the Board abdicating some responsibility for exerting professional and political leadership toward reform. It is clear that PAT and allied organizations stand firmly against most of the reforms the Board of Education has in mind. They are against the four-year comprehensive high school, for fear the academic level will drop. They are against the four-year middle school for similar reasons. They are against either heterogeneous or ungraded classes. They are very much against the educational park, even though they don't know what it is. For PAT leaders, the educational park means more busing, more bureaucracy, and more levelling of standards. The thought of mixing pupils of different classes and ethnic groups throws them into the same panic that pairings did.[39] As one PAT leader related: "All these innovations the Board is talking about, putting them in the educational park, they are all innovations that have been tried since 1947. They come under the heading of 'progressive education.' Every single one of these innovations was considered a failure by the Board itself, and now they're taking all these failures and putting them into one setting. How would we evacuate 18,000 children in the event of a fire? How could you prevent epidemics? There have been instances of hepatitis in one Brooklyn area and in another area it was encephalitis. If these kids were going to an educational park, those diseases would have spread all through the community."

These were the words of one of the top PAT officials. The Board of Education has some responsibility to handle the educational parks idea quite differently than it handled pairings, if it hopes to prevent a further PAT uprising. Its present caution and unwillingness to communicate with the public do not indicate that it has learned very much from the past. Calling local PAT groups and pleading and cajoling with them may not help in gaining greater acceptance. Neither will tipping them off in advance by hinting at plans and then not following through on them. Until the Board is ready to engage competent researchers and educational planners to develop plans for parks, and until it is then ready to exert some leadership in trying to persuade the community of their educational merits, all the while working privately to mobilize as much community support as possible, it stands a very good chance of having one more good concept (and one that is much more basic to reform than pairings) become discredited and defeated before it gets put into effect. There is nothing inevitable or deterministic about the response PAT may give, and it is up to the Board to assume the leadership necessary to forge a coalition for change.

Chapter Five

CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

New York City's experiences with efforts at school desegregation indicate that even the Board's limited implementation of plans would not have taken place without continued pressures from the civil rights movement. A comprehensive historical study by Dr. Irving Goldaber, deputy executive director of the City Commission on Human Rights, documents this quite clearly.[1] Goldaber showed, through an analysis of 15 major confrontations of civil rights groups and the Board from 1954 through 1964, that Board actions were a function of the intensity of civil rights protests. The more far-reaching the protest threats, the more likely the Board was to initiate a desegregation action. The Rev. Milton Galamison's threat in 1960 of a citywide boycott if the Board did not implement its open enrollment recommendations was an example of this.[2] The buildup of pressure from the civil rights movement, then, was perhaps the single most important factor in getting the Board to move at all. As one top Board official once noted to me: "We would vegetate without the civil rights movement."[3]

Yet, though civil rights groups were able to move the Board toward some actions, the successes were limited. Most of the Board's forward looking policy statements were not implemented, as it responded to the weight of public opinion and political pressure from interests opposed to desegregation. Indeed, as Goldaber's study also indicates, some civil rights group demands -- e.g., for a citywide plan, a timetable, and nonvoluntary desegregation techniques -- did not lead to Board actions, regardless of the magnitude of threats.[4]

This is to say, then, that the pressures on the Board from civic groups and school officials to limit desegregation reforms were much stronger and more effective than any the civil rights movement could muster. Additional explanations for the movement's limited effectiveness come from an analysis of the movement itself. The most significant conditions that blunted the impact of its demands were as follows: First, it was unable to mobilize any sustained grassroots organization and support. Though civil rights leaders could always demonstrate a groundswell of protest against the inferior education their children were receiving in ghetto schools, the movement was never able to direct all protests toward a common goal. Second, the movement was unable to achieve any significant degree of unity and leadership. This was accompanied by many differences and internal conflicts over strategy that consumed much of the movement's scarce resources. The Board was always able to capitalize on such divisions. Finally, the pursuit of a conflict strategy, emphasizing racial balance rather than goals that might appeal to a wider public, also hurt the movement. It tended to alienate potential white allies and moderate civil rights organizations. It also intensified the strength of the neighborhood school movement, thereby giving the Board a justification for inaction. This chapter deals with all three conditions, tracing both their causes and their effects.

The Civil Rights Movement

Some dedicated militants who have led the school desegregation fight in New York City suggest as one reason for their limited successes the fact that there is no civil rights movement there. Rather, they suggest, there are diverse local and national organizations, participating in different ways and with different goals.[5] There is much truth in this assertion.

A number of civic groups have pressed the Board of Education for more school desegregation. There were first of all Negro organizations, both national and local. The most influential were the NAACP, Urban League, CORE, Parents Workshop for Equality, and Harlem Parents Committee. Then there were Puerto Rican organizations that participated in a more marginal and limited way. They included the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican Forum, National Association for Puerto Rican Civil Rights, ASPIRA, and some local groups. White liberal organizations also participated, including American Jewish Congress, Protestant Council, American Jewish Committee, Anti Defamation League, Catholic Inter-Racial Council, American Civil Liberties Union, Citizens Committee for Children, the Liberal Party, Reform Democrat groups, ADA, and a few unions. The white liberal community was involved in the struggle from its inception. Finally, there were various other participants who were involved more on an individual than organizational basis. They included activist academicians, city and school officials, and various ad hoc ghetto parent or white civic groups other than those mentioned above.

To forge any kind of strong, unified coalition from among this diversity of interests would have required more astute political leadership than one might ever expect to find. These organizations had markedly different constituencies (racial, ethnic, class, religious, geographical). They differed as well in scope of operations (national, citywide, borough, local), in purpose (civil rights, educational, labor, political, religious), in structure (centralized vs. federated), and in durability (permanent, ad hoc). Each organization thus related to school desegregation controversies with a different set of agendas and needs.

The result has been a pattern of fragmentation and conflict within, between, and among this diverse collection of organizations, with a consequent dilution of their political effectiveness. The organizations had to solve internal problems of factionalism and differences as to appropriate strategy before they ever could hope to exert a sustaining influence on Board decisions. Divergent loyalties, organizational needs, and constituency pressures have quite consistently set them apart from one another, except under conditions of extreme crisis or clarity as to the Board's intentions. When it became clear, for example, that the Board had no intention of implementing its permissive zoning plans, pairings, or the Allen Report recommendations, then internal differences were glossed over for the sake of pushing together against an unyielding foe. Likewise, when some basic changes took place in the mix of political forces affecting the struggle -- the appointment of a new superintendent or lay Board, an order or report from the State Education Department -- offering a ray of hope for reform, integrationist groups would join together. But the coalition would rarely stay together for any length of time.

The Nonvoluntary Stage

By 1963, civil rights leaders had become convinced that open enrollment would never make an appreciable change in the pattern of expanding school segregation. The struggle moved on to a new phase that might appropriately be labelled the "nonvoluntary" stage. As already noted, it began in May 1963, with State Education Commissioner James Allen's request that the New York City Board of Education submit a report to him on the racial composition of its schools. He also requested that it include a statement of its plans to redress "racial imbalance" -- a term he tentatively defined as any marked departures from a 50-50 minority group-white pupil ratio.[6] Allen's actions reinforced civil rights group pressures for more sweeping desegregation plans. All civil rights organizations were in agreement that the Open Enrollment plan had failed. They took the position that the plan placed too much of a burden and too much responsibility on minority group parents for pupil transfers, that it had never been well publicized, that its implementation had never been policed, and that systemwide, nonvoluntary plans with a timetable for their implementation were necessary.

The next two years were characterized by intensified conflict between civil rights groups and the Board, and between both and the opposition -- the neighborhood school movement. Indeed, a series of self-generating and expanding conflicts was set in motion that polarized, rigidified, and stalemated relations among key participants in the struggle.

The main events of the years 1963 to 1965 were as follows: A new superintendent, Calvin Gross, took office in April 1963. Civil rights groups organized over the summer for a citywide boycott to be put into effect if the Board failed to come up with a satisfactory desegregation plan. In August, Gross met with parents from East Harlem, Central Harlem, Morningside Heights, Washingron Heights, and Inwood at a public hearing sponsored by the two local school boards (Districts 10-11, 12-13-14) serving those communities.[7] In his first public appearance since taking office, he acknowledged the problems of segregated schools, but emphasized an upgrading of instruction and services. Twenty-five of the 27 speakers (all from the districts) emphasized integration. Considerable criticism of his statement was expressed.

A week later, August 20, Gross met in his office with members of civil rights groups. Officials of the City Commission on Human Rights attended as observers.[8] No agreement was reached. Another meeting took place two days later, also with no agreement reached. Civil rights groups then organized themselves into a coalition, the City-Wide Committee for School Integration, composed of Harlem Parents Committee, NAACP (national office and eight metropolitan branches), Parents Workshop for Equality, CORE (Brooklyn, New York, and Bronx branches), and Urban League of Greater New York. The groups pledged themselves to conduct a citywide school boycott action September 9, unless the Board of Education issued a desegregation plan and timetable.[9] In September, just before the opening of school, the City Commission on Human Rights called in the Board of Education to mediate the dispute and avert the boycott. A tentative agreement was reached that the boycott would be called off, giving Gross three months to develop a citywide desegregation plan and timetable.[10]

Gross produced a report in December, but it contained neither a timetable nor a citywide plan. Civil rights groups charged that he had acted in a "spineless and vacillating manner," noting that Gross's report violated the September agreement. They made immediate plans for a February boycott. Gross continued to offer various compensatory education plans over the next few months.[11]

Other parties then entered the struggle. The Board's new president, James B. Donovan, issued a series of public statements rebuking civil rights groups. He reasserted the Board's commitment to retaining the neighborhood school concept. He characterized the civil rights groups as indulging in "jingoistic slogans" but having no "constructive, practical plan." At one point he suggested that he was running a Board of Education, not a board of "integration" or a board of "transportation."[12] This further intensified the conflict.

Various civic groups and city agencies took public positions supporting either side. Stanley Lowell, chairman of the City Commission on Human Rights, issued a statement expressing his agency's position that the Board was following a "separate but equal doctrine" in putting so much emphasis on improving schools in minority group areas. Though he later decried what he called "extremists on both sides," Lowell urged the Board on behalf of his agency to move forward with the implementation of a wide variety of techniques -- rezoning, extended use of pairings, educational parks -- for desegregation.[13] The American Jewish Congress publicized its own plan for 85 pairings throughout the city.[14] One of the only other white civic groups to make a public statement at this time was the Citizens Committee for Children. They urged support of Gross in his efforts to improve the city schools.[15]

The month of January 1964 was devoted to preparing for the coming boycott, announced for February 3. Latent divisions within the civil rights movement began to manifest themselves. As the Rev. Milton Galamison, chairman of the City-Wide Committee, began issuing more and more militant statements in response to Donovan's hostile characterizations of the movement and Gross's inaction, NAACP officials made their own public statements disassociating themselves from Galamison's tactics. When Galamison had announced in late December that he would rather see the city school system "destroyed -- maybe it has run its course anyway -- than permit it to perpetuate racial segregation," the press played this up.[16] When he announced on January 7, 1964, that the threatened boycott might spread to other major cities in the North, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of NAACP said: "We are not committing ourselves to a spread of boycotts. We do not believe in threatening boycotts. Our organization believes it is better for children to go to school than stay at home. We would rather see children stay in school while the adults argued." Commenting on Galamison's earlier statement, Wilkins said: "We in the NAACP cannot associate ourselves with any sentiment that suggests the destruction of the public school system as a solution to the segregation problem." Wilkins also attacked Board President James Donovan as a "tough-talking school Board chairman and street-corner protagonist," but his doubts about Galamison's leadership and about the boycott were clear.[17] NAACP education officials and most of its New York City branches, however, backed the boycott.

The boycott took place as scheduled on February 3, under the leadership of Galamison and Bayard Rustin, national civil rights leader who gave organizing help during the last week. About 464,000 pupils or 44.8 per cent of the total enrollment were absent that day. This was well above the normal absentee rate of 100,000 a day. Though Board President James Donovan referred to the boycott as a "fizzle," it was clearly not that. A week later Galamison announced that the City-Wide Committee would sponsor another one-day boycott in March or April, "whenever it will hurt the Board the most economically." He said it would be called "Fizzle No. 2."[18]

White liberal groups then made public statements airing their opposition to some of the civil rights demands and tactics. The Anti Defamation League, The American Jewish Committee, the Liberal Party, and the New York Civil Liberties Union all expressed their opposition to the busing of white children for purposes of desegregation. Only the American Jewish Congress had backed the demand of civil rights groups for citywide pairings and other nonvoluntary plans.[19]

Galamison began to meet additional resistance within the City-Wide Committee. A representative of CORE expressed dissatisfaction with his leadership. NAACP then pulled out, followed by CORE.[20] Urban League maintained a tenuous tie. Officials in all these groups objected to Galamison's tendency to speak out on his own and to announce policies and decisions not yet agreed upon by the committee as a whole. Many felt that a second boycott would be a tactical mistake and might jeopardize the progress they had already made.

The Board of Education then started to back down from its earlier plans. It had issued a report in late January, announcing the possibility of 20 pairings. Over the next few months, it was subjected to massive pressure from the white community and deleted many pairings from the original list.[21] On March 13, Parents and Taxpayers (PAT) drew the approximately 15,000 demonstrators in a march on City Hall which so impressed Mayor Wagner and the Board, who had already noted the volume of mail and personal communications they had received protesting the pairings.

The second boycott on March 16, according to the Board, drew some 268,000 children. The Board announced later that it had compiled the figures in haste and that there might have been more absentees.[22] It didn't really matter, however, because a backlash had already started to set in. Civil rights groups attempted to heal their differences, with NAACP officials announcing that their organization was not opposed to another school boycott.[23] This did not prevent the Board from continuing to backtrack on its original plans.

The Board's final plans were announced May 28. They called for four pairings and the rezoning of eight junior high schools, shifts of sixth and ninth graders into new junior high and high school arrangements, and a redesign of four high schools to make them comprehensive schools.[24]

Gross negotiated with civil rights leaders to defer their demands for more changes for another year while he sat down with them in private meetings to work out further plans. Meanwhile, a comprehensive set of recommendations was released by the three-member commission set up by James Allen . The commission called for a four-year comprehensive high school, integrated four-year middle schools, educational complexes and parks, and much more fringe area construction.[25] The private meetings between Gross and civil rights groups focused on some of these recommendations. The desegregation of junior high schools and fringe area construction were among the most significant topics of discussion. Civil rights groups abandoned any further interest in pressing for more pairings.

Civil rights groups then declared a moratorium on public protests in an election year. There was great concern that protests might only increase the vote for conservative, anti-civil rights candidates. Parents and Taxpayers meanwhile conducted their two-day boycott at the opening of school in September.

Despite the new shows of unity of civil rights groups, brought on by the strength of the opposition, the Board's inactions, and the Allen Report, the Board continued to show few signs of embarking on any major desegregation plans. Meetings with Gross broke down in the fall of 1964, as first Galamison and later representatives of Harlem Parents Committee and EQUAL, the two most militant grassroots groups, withdrew from the sessions. Galamison led a shutdown of segregated junior high schools and of special "600" schools for delinquent and retarded children, after expressing dissatisfaction with the 1964 integration plan. He was also disappointed with the outcome of the meetings of civil rights leaders with Gross. He got support from grassroots militants

(Parents Workshop, EQUAL, Harlem Parents, some CORE and NAACP chapters, W.E.B. Du Bois Clubs). The national CORE office, through James Farmer, supported him at the very end; but NAACP and Urban League favored continued political bargaining, in the hope that Superintendent Gross's plan (to be released in February or March) would contain some significant innovations. Galamison went ahead with his shutdown in January. It was estimated that between 4250 and 4500 students out of a total registration of 18,000 stayed away from classes.[26]

Just after the shutdown ended, the Board dismissed Gross.[27] His integration report was nevertheless presented and referred to by the Board as the Gross Blueprint. It involved more transfers of sixth and ninth graders, but no significant innovations to effect much desegregation. Civil rights groups unanimously condemned it.[28] NAACP representatives led a demonstration protesting the report as a watering down of the Allen Report.

On April 22, 1965, the Board announced its new policy statement, committing itself to a drastic reorganization of the school system along lines of the Allen Report recommendations for new, four-year intermediate schools, four-year comprehensive high schools, and some prekindergarten programs in minority group areas.[30] All civil rights groups commended the statement.

Since then, there has been no implementation and much backtracking. Superintendent Donovan promised to come up in a year with more specific plans and asked for that time to "do studies" and "retool." The plans he and the Board came up with the next year so antagonized civil rights groups that they staged a "tear-in" at Board headquarters as a symbolic gesture of their complete disappointment with the report.[31] Meanwhile, the Board had planned for most intermediate schools to be built in the ghetto or in segregated white communities rather than in fringe areas. It hedged on whether the middle school should be for three or four years. And it planned to build all middle schools at only 1800 capacity, thereby having to draw from a narrow area and thus restrict possibilities of desegregation.

Civil rights groups by this time were so demoralized and so tired from their long series of defeats that many of them temporarily retired from the desegregation struggle. A number of them moved on to work in the poverty program where they felt they might see more tangible results.

Some have continued to carry on the battle. A number of court suits were brought against the Board for expanding segregation, in contradiction to its policy statements. The most significant of these cases was pressed by a group of parents in the JHS 275 area of Southeast Brooklyn. The litigants asked Commissioner Allen to force the Board of Education to build an integrated educational park in the area, rather than to build some dozen-odd segregated schools that they had planned. Allen actually issued a stay order on the construction of those segregated neighborhood schools. Other cases on the Board's tendency to zone junior high and high schools in Queens to expand segregation have also been brought before Allen.[32]

The Community Control, Decentralization Phase

The minority group community, however, has temporarily given up on pressing the New York City Board of Education for more desegregation. The New York City school struggle entered a new phase in September 1966 with the IS 201 controversy.[33] Parents in the East Harlem community where 201 was to open at the start of that school year gave the Board of Education the option of either desegregating the school as it had promised on numerous occasions, or giving much more control over the running of the school to local parents and community groups. That single controversy has spawned many others throughout the city, with parents, community groups, and often teachers protesting against inadequate facilities, and with parent and community groups demanding greater control. A "peoples' board" was formed in December 1966 at Board headquarters, as a group of irate parents took over a public hearing.[34] Community groups are now organizing in many areas in the city to mount a series of protests against the inferior education they feel their children are getting and to demand more local control. This movement could lead to many reforms in the system, forcing greater decentralization and responsiveness of school officials to community needs and demands. At present, the movement is focused much more on breaking the power of the Board than on specific desegregation plans. The press toward desegregation alone is ended, though desegregation will undoubtedly continue to be one of many demands that some local community groups make.

In sum, the history of relations between the civil rights movement and the New York City Board of Education has been one of an increased scope of demands and pressures on the one side and limited action on the other. Civil rights groups moved from demands for more and better local schools to demands for permissive and, later, nonvoluntary transfers. Eventually, they asked for citywide desegregation plans with a timetable for their implementation. The Board responded with studies, the establishment of commissions and subcommissions, advanced policy statements and limited implementation. When the Board failed to implement the Allen Report's recommendations and actually used the report to promote segregation, the civil rights movement responded with the demand that the Board give up much of its authority for the running of the system.

These are the essential facts of the history. The question of why the civil rights movement was only able to effect the most limited reforms can now be addressed.

Grassroots Mobilization and Support

No social movement can succeed for very long without strong grassroots support. Yet civil rights leaders were unable to maintain any permanent organization or sustained grassroots protest. There were several reasons for these failures. One was the continued change in population base in ghetto and fringe areas. The population turnover all but precluded the possibilities of developing any permanent organization.

A second reason was that Negro and Puerto Rican communities have not had as many existing grassroots organizations on which to build their movement as did other coalitions -- for example, the neighborhood school movement. The latter could mobilize a following while using as a nucleus already established homeowner, taxpayer, and civic groups. This was not possible in such recently developed ghettos as East Harlem, South Bronx, and Brownsville. It was difficult even in Harlem.

Many ghetto residents were disenfranchised. They were neither homeowners nor registered voters. Until very recently, their communities were generally quite atomized, powerless, and alienated from the wider society, for rather obvious historical reasons. The civil rights movement and the recent poverty program have begun to change this condition. The effects are only beginning to be felt, however, and they are still quite limited. As one civil rights leader put it, at a public conference where strategies were being reviewed: "We cannot divorce our discussions of school integration from ghetto culture, conditions, and housing. The reason we have had so much difficulty in getting moving on school integration is that we have had so little political strength at the grassroots. We will become politically effective only when we get white and black parents who are taxpayers and voters to present a united front. Black people in Harlem are not organized."[35] This was an accurate statement, and one made by a person who had lived in the Harlem community and knew its culture very well.

Newly formed antipoverty groups like MEND, East Harlem Tenants' Council, Youth-in-Action, HARYOU-ACT, and Mobilization for Youth are attempting to develop viable community action organizations and a sense of ethnic solidarity and group consciousness among ghetto populations. They are just getting underway, however, and face many obstacles. Bureaucratic entanglements with city and federal officials, pressures from many institutions against community action projects, and local leadership struggles have made the task of these antipoverty groups a very difficult one. A further development of these programs under the Lindsay administration may speed up the organization of ghetto populations. Yet, by the time the Negro and Puerto Rican communities do get organized and constitute major power blocs, there may not be enough remaining whites with whom to integrate. Furthermore, minority group populations may not want integration by that time. Many don't give it high priority now.

A third reason, then, for the school desegregation movement's limited grassroots organization is the outlook of ghetto populations. Some Negro and Puerto Rican-led parent associations have the same neighborhood school outlook as whites. Some of them don't see the relationship between desegregation and quality. They don't have any clear conception as to the benefits of an integrated education for their children. Like most lower class populations, they see the world in somewhat concretistic terms. They see solutions to their school problems as local ones -- in the upgrading and renovating of their neighborhood schools.

Board of Education programs have contributed to this outlook, and in many cases quite considerably. The poor planning and limited implementation of the Open Enrollment plan, for example, have discouraged many minority group parents from ever wanting to transfer their children out of local schools. Lectures from school officials in sending schools on the many psychological problems minority group children may have, if they transfer out, certainly don't raise the level of enthusiasm for such programs within the minority group community. Neither does the poor planning for bus service. The Board's continued reluctance to have parents or teachers on the buses, monitoring the children, has helped to make some minority group parents so fearful about what might happen to their children while on the bus that they have come to feel it would be better to keep their children at local schools.

Other conditions have contributed to the lack of interest in transferring for desegregation. Civil rights leaders have continually complained that minority group children always have to do much more traveling than white children to attend newly integrated schools. They have begun to resent that fact and ask for equal travel time, maintaining that it is only just that both populations bear the cost of integration. The Board feels that it would not be possible to equalize the travel time in many cases. Demographic changes in many parts of the city are such that schools can be desegregated only if Negro and Puerto Rican populations journey out to white areas. Equally or perhaps more important, the Board does not feel that it is possible to induce white parents to bus their children any distance for purposes of desegregation. Civil rights leaders claim that the Board could compromise by building schools in fringe areas and on so-called "neutral" grounds, equidistant from minority group and white communities. The Board has not done this. This complaint by civil rights leaders has been heard in ghetto communities, and it has further increased parents' reluctance to transfer their children out.

The United Parents Association, the headquarters organization for local PAs, has also contributed to the disinterest among some Negro and Puerto Rican parents in desegregation. Though UPA has had only a limited appeal to some ghetto populations, partly because of its traditional, middle class programs, it has embarked on a major organizing campaign to increase its membership in ghetto communities. It has a number of projects designed to increase the participation of Negro and Puerto Rican parents in school affairs.[36] If it is successful, support for school desegregation may be even less than it is now.

If Negro parents have been somewhat reluctant to transfer their children out of local schools for desegregation, Puerto Rican parents have been even more reluctant. Interviews with Puerto Rican parents and civic leaders have suggested a number of reasons for this. The Puerto Rican population has a more tightly knit family structure than Negroes, and Puerto Rican parents tend to be more protective of their children than Negro parents. When top Board officials held some public meetings in the South Bronx in September 1965, to announce the location of middle schools out of the community, there were strong protests against this from the Puerto Rican population.[37] The latter finally won out, and the schools were located in the heart of the ghetto.

Puerto Ricans had other reasons for not supporting integration.[38] Some didn't want to be identified with the Negro. Their experiences on the island with the race issue had never been as negative as those of the Negro in the United States. They did not want the low status connotations of being categorized as having the same social problems as the Negro. Many Puerto Ricans participated in the first civil rights sponsored boycott, but their support for desegregation since then has not been that strong.

One strategy the Board has followed that further reinforced this support for neighborhood schools within the Negro and Puerto Rican population was to provide more services in selected ghetto schools than in receiving schools under Open Enrollment. Minority group parents would often testify at public hearings that they would much rather send their children to segregated ghetto schools with their extra services, than to an Open Enrollment school where their children were herded into segregated classrooms and not given the programs they could get locally. Thus far, the Board has chosen to concentrate its scarce resources in ghetto and segregated white schools rather than in fringe area and integrated schools. Though many minority group parents do not believe that their children are being adequately educated in ghetto schools, even with all the extra services and compensatory programs that these schools supposedly have, they nevertheless have become convinced that conditions in ghetto schools may be no worse than in receiving schools under Open Enrollment, and perhaps are better.

It has been difficult, then, for civil rights leaders to develop and maintain a strong, grassroots organization under such conditions. To be sure, there have been some significant exceptions to this pattern of disinterest on the part of minority group parents in school desegregation. Parents Workshop (Galamison's organization) had organized many parents to transfer their children under the Board's utilization and Open Enrollment programs. Civil rights groups were able to draw significant numbers of absentees in both boycotts. Civic leaders in the Brownsville community were able to mobilize a large parent following in 1965 and 1966 to protest the Board's plans for building more segregated schools and ask for an integrated educational park instead.[39]

The battle for grassroots support for desegregation, however, seems to have been lost. One of the reasons for this is that neither civil rights leaders nor minority group parents have any confidence that they can push the Board toward desegregation through militant grassroots protest. They have seen too many plans subverted in their implementation. And they no longer have much faith in the integrity of the Board to mandate any reforms.

Since the IS 201 controversy in September 1966, community participation, control, and Board accountability have become the movement's rallying cry.[40] The same groundswell of discontent still exists. Indeed, it may well have increased.

The same organizational problems remain to be solved, however. They are problems of unity, of leadership, and of organization as such.

There are many sources for factionalism and separatism within the movement. There are differences between those who still want to press the Board for desegregation and those who want better education in the ghetto, through more community participation and control. There are differences between Negro and Puerto Rican groups, and between groups in different areas. In a situation of continued scarcity of school resources, there is some competition between groups from different ghetto communities for an increasing share of services. Each community understandably feels that its problems are the most acute.

Then, there are many variations on the community control theme. It may well be necessary to maintain and preserve these different points of view within separate communities. Any attempt to force a consensus on specific plans and strategies where no basis for it exists would be bound to fail. There has to be some overall coordination, however, by a committee of citywide leaders who provide political and technical help to the leaders of each subcommunity. They must be willing to delegate authority and power, while at the same time convincing local groups that coordination of their protests and programs is essential.

One strategy that protest groups developed in this regard was to elect their own "peoples'" board to coordinate the movement. Ironically, such Boards face the same problems that the regular Board does. They must deal with a variety of local groups and factions, each of which may be making different demands. Some regular Board members who would like to be more responsive to these various groups have some difficulty in finding out just who they are and who their constituencies are.

This has been a perennial problem. Unfortunately, often just when the Board begins to understand who the leadership and followers of protest groups are, their memberships change and the civil rights movement moves into a new phase, with a new set of demands. The Board must then respond and accommodate to a new situation. If the composition of the lay Board and top headquarters staff also changes, this compounds the problem. Such a pattern has been common in New York City.

It should also be noted, however, that the Board has always welcomed the protests of Negro and Puerto Rican parent groups who demanded better local schools rather than desegregation. Some Negro and Puerto Rican parent groups had testified to that effect at public hearings during the period of most intensive controversy over desegregation. Their demands have given the Board the opportunity to play off parent groups against integration leaders.

The civil rights movement was thus occasionally caught with its flanks uncovered, so to speak, and became vulnerable to divide and conquer tactics. This is not to impute any undemocratic or sinister motives to the Board. It is to suggest, however, that the Board had to work for some kind of consensus in times of mounting community conflict and criticism of the school system. Once such organizational defense was to try to isolate the militants from their following. Sometimes, their divisions were so public, it wasn't necessary to do so. Parent groups from Harlem, East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Bedford-Stuyvesant have all protested publicly for more and better neighborhood schools, before the civil rights movement gave up on desegregation.

The divisions were equally public among the leaders. Board members reported that in private meetings with civil rights leaders in 1964 they could discern rather quickly some differences in strategy and point of view. As one Board member noted: "Leaders from x organization would never say anything without first looking across at y, to see if they were ahead of or behind him. They always seemed to want to be ahead and not get accused of being too moderate."[41] Diverse organizational needs as well as personality conflicts contributed to this pattern. It was understandable, but it limited the movement's effectiveness, just as the failure to maintain a sustained grassroots organization did.

Problems of Unity, Leadership, and Strategy

Indeed, leadership struggles and conflicts over strategy have been perennial problems.

Historically, there have been two major factions within the Negro civil rights movement. There were established national organizations -- mainly NAACP and Urban League, and to a lesser extent CORE -- and local, grassroots parent groups. Initial impetus for the school desegregation fight in New York City came from both national and local groups, though in different ways. The differences were symbolic of underlying conflicts in values, strategy, and political style and have existed since the struggle first got underway. Numerous interviews with civil rights leaders indicated that the inability of national and grassroots groups to work together and maintain unity for any extended period of time was one of their biggest problems. The conflict between NAACP officials and the Rev. Galamison and his Parents Workshop was especially intense. Several civil rights leaders noted that it was their biggest stumbling block to developing any politically effective coalition.

Local Groups

Parents Workshop was the main local, grassroots group in the movement throughout most of the New York City school desegregation struggle. It was by far the most militant group and as a result came into conflict with national civil rights organizations over appropriate strategy. Its strategy was to demand the implementation of major desegregation plans, and then if the Board gave no sign of responding to any degree, to threaten strikes and boycotts. It engaged in many sit-ins at headquarters and many demonstrations. It is important to note that most of its demands were for the Board to implement its own policy statements. The Rev. Galamison and his group were not opposed to negotiation and bargaining. They had engaged in it, and with success, on a number of occasions. More often, however, they were frustrated in their demands. They began to believe firmly in demonstrations as the only way to get the Board to move. The history of the New York City school desegregation struggle indicates that there is much to be said for this point of view. Strikes and threats of strikes were one of the only ways civil rights groups could get the Board to implement desegregation plans periodically, though even they reached a point of diminishing utility as a political strategy.

By the early 1960's, the Rev. Galamison and his associates began to realize that grassroots, parent-based organizations were not strong enough in and of themselves to move the Board of Education or the mayor toward any major reforms. They realized the importance of establishing alliances with national civil rights organizations, even though their relations with NAACP had not always been amicable ones. Citywide and national organizations had supported some of Parents Workshop's earlier actions, but the alliances were of an ad hoc nature and always linked to particular local issues. All civil rights and liberal white organizations involved in desegregation controversies saw the importance of presenting a united front to the Board.

One of the main reasons was that each had resources the other did not have, both were essential for waging an effective campaign. Indeed, the resources were quite complementary. Parents Workshop had little money and virtually no professional staff. NAACP and Urban League, on their side, had little grassroots strength in ghetto communities. Civil rights leaders often commented that NAACP had the money, while Galamison had the people. This was often said with a sense of deep disappointment, as the difficulties of maintaining viable relations between the two were so well-recognized.

There have been other locally based ghetto parent organizations, but none was ever able to attract nearly as large a following as Galamison did. The most significant of these other groups was the Harlem Parents Committee. Harlem Parents Committee was formed in the summer of 1963, in protest against conditions in schools throughout the community and against what its officials still refer to as the "apartheid" nature of the New York City school system.[42] This group had been unable to mobilize a large following on any protest actions, but it has nevertheless engaged in some significant efforts. One of its officials wrote in 1965 what has become known as the Harlem Black Paper, a report on the history of expanding segregation and deteriorating quality in New York City schools.[43] The organization puts out a monthly newsletter, documenting in some detail conditions in ghetto schools. They made an important contribution to the organizing efforts of IS 201 parents. And they have participated as an active constituent organization in the various civil rights coalitions that have been in existence since 1963.

Harlem has always been a difficult area for integrationists to organize. It is so large (400,000 population) that diverse factions and points of view have merged there. The main civic leaders include clergymen and politicians. Adam Clayton Powell occasionally offered his support, but he was not basically involved in the school desegregation struggle. Many Harlem politicians had no interest in pressing for school desegregation. The Board of Education had often been successful in getting statements from Harlem political leaders that they were not that committed to school desegregation, and then using such statements against civil rights leaders who were pushing the struggle.[44]

The other grassroots support for desegregation from within the Negro community came largely from local CORE and NAACP chapters.[45] CORE was quite militant, especially in the Bronx, Harlem, and Brooklyn, but they had few members and were not well-organized. NAACP was well-organized, but their strongest chapters were in middle class areas. Harlem was one of the communities where NAACP was weakest of all.

In brief, the Rev. Galamison and Parents Workshop were far and away the most powerful grassroots group within the movement throughout most of the struggle. While their main strength was in Brooklyn, they had an active group in South Jamaica for a while, and another in the Bronx. They were in many respects the core of the grassroots, school desegregation movement in New York City.

National and Citywide Groups

NAACP. NAACP became involved in the school desegregation struggle in an active way only in the late 1950's, after its Legal Defense Fund began to take on some *de facto* segregation school cases.[46] Individual local branches of NAACP throughout the city had started to become involved as well -- though many with middle class constituents were opposed to desegregation.

Some NAACP officials had not only been uninvolved in the 1950's, they were emphatically opposed to getting involved for fear that they would undermine their school desegregation efforts in the South. Since they were pressing Southern courts and school officials to be "color blind," they did not see how they could then turn around ask Northern officials to be "color conscious." This application of a logic that was relevant for school desegregation in the South to *de facto* segregation in the North was one factor accounting for some of NAACP's hesitations about getting embroiled in the New York City school situation.

Another factor was the middle class character and outlook of its constituencies, an outlook similar to that of some of its headquarters officials who were in fact strong advocates of the neighborhood school.

Their general posture when they did intervene in the late 1950's was to react to rather than lead local parent pressures for desegregation. They had not fully taken on the action-orientation that parent groups began to exhibit.

Though NAACP has become much more militant in recent years, the conflict between their preference for following a private negotiation and bargaining strategy and the preference of local parent groups from Brooklyn and Harlem for boycotts and demonstrations continued through 1965.

NAACP's increased militancy in the 1960's and its adoption of a strategy of selective demonstrations, "when necessary," was due in part to the increased militancy of the national civil rights movement. It was also a result of the active efforts of its education specialists who were close to the New York City problem and who convinced the national office and the board of the necessity of direct-action tactics. They were successful in persuading the national office to allow Galamison to be selected as chairman of the City-Wide Committee. And they had to hold their ground against considerable pressure from national office personnel to be much less militantly involved in the New York City school desegregation fight.[47]

From 1963 on, however, the publicly stated positions of NAACP have been virtually as advanced in their criticism of the Board's past actions and in their demands for radically new desegregation plans as were those of local parent groups. For example, in the December 1963 meeting with Board officials, when Gross made his progress report, NAACP urged the Board, as they had a few months earlier, to adopt desegregation plans that were citywide in scope and based on pupil assignments rather than on the voluntary choice of parents.[48] They urged abandonment of what they referred to as the Board's old "separate but equal" doctrine. Later, in March 1965, they urged implementation of all the specific recommendations of the Allen Report, including the integrated four-year middle school and educational complexes and parks.[49] They even threatened appropriate demonstrations and litigation if the Board did not provide strong leadership in support of desegregation plans. Indeed, NAACP officials and members did stage a demonstration a month later at Board headquarters, protesting the limited proposals that had been offered in the Gross Blueprint of December 1966.

It would be inaccurate to argue, then, that NAACP's demands were much more moderate than those of Parents Workshop or Harlem Parents Committee. That was true to some extent before 1963, but it has not been so much the case since then. To be sure, there were always some traces of disenchantment with the militants in periodic public statements of Roy Wilkins, NAACP's executive secretary. He expressed strong criticism of Galamison's statements to the press a month before the first boycott. A few months after both boycotts he made another indirect criticism by stating a basic policy of "militancy without resort to adventurism," applying the phrase to civil rights groups that plunged into demonstrations without considering the target and the possibilities of success.[50] His first response to the Gross Blueprint, the following March (1965), was to characterize its recommendations as "a giant step forward."[51] Many of NAACP's branch presidents in New York City, as well as national office staff, informed Wilkins of their dismay. As one NAACP official noted: "The branches weren't too happy with his giant step forward business with Gross's Blueprint -- nor did he remain happy with it for any length of time."[52]

Wilkins was skeptical about the value of the first boycott and expressed the view in private that it might not be a useful tactic. Yet he was swayed by his local branches and education officials. As one top NAACP official noted: "Wilkins exerted some pressure toward our disaffiliation from the Committee. He'd had grave misgivings anyway about the first boycott, but he cooperated then, since it became clear that the branches would do so."[53]

A code existed within NAACP that national officials should try not to intervene in local (city) issues. It was in many respects much more difficult to ensure compliance with that code in New York City than elsewhere. Yet, even there, the code still carried weight. As one NAACP official related: "There was one painful meeting of all groups after the first boycott. Two people raised the charge that Wilkins was running the organization, run in turn by the Board. The president of one branch got up and made an impassioned rebuttal. That is one of our most militant branches, but he pointed out that NAACP branches functioned within a national policy adopted at the convention, and was not run by Wilkins. He was enraged." At the same time, the national office did try at times to intervene, perhaps more so than in other cities. Another NAACP official related: "New York City is always a special problem for the national office, with its being located right here. That location often makes them feel impelled to take action on an issue more appropriate to local action. And unless they're extremely careful, they'll get involved in actions and issues more appropriate to local branches. Education is the one issue on which the branches achieved day-to-day coordination. National tried hard to keep out, and didn't always succeed, and there was some animosity about this."[54]

The general position taken by some militants and NAACP critics, that NAACP took a moderate position in New York City because of pressures from the Board and from Wilkins, is only partially true. If the national office were the sole determinant of NAACP positions and strategy preferences, one would not be able to explain the militant stands NAACP did make.

The Urban League of Greater New York. Another active participant in the desegregation struggle was the Urban League of Greater New York.[55] It played a key leadership role from 1954 through 1964.

One of the Urban League's most significant contributions was to gather and disseminate needed data on how well the Board was implementing its policy statements. Urban League, unlike NAACP, always had a full-time professional staff person to work on such matters, filling the position of education direction. The Urban League's educational directors have been highly competent and established professionals. They played a role that few other civil rights leaders or ogranizations were able to play during those years.

Urban League, like NAACP, had access to the mayor and was regarded as a respected organization in the city. It had close ties to the Democratic Party and to top Board and city officials. Mr. Charles Silver, president of the Board of Education from 1955 to 1961 was also president of Urban League's board in the late 1950's. Despite these contacts, and despite the fact that Urban League was regarded as a responsible organization whose judgments and facts could be trusted, it was unable to move either the mayor or the Board in any appreciable way on the school desegregation issue. Some militant civil rights leaders believed that it was unable to do so precisely because of its relations with the establishment.

As dedicated to change as Urban League's specialists were, the pressures on them from its national board to refrain from pushing the Board of Education were tremendous. They were similar in nature to the pressures sometimes exerted by NAACP officials on its education staff. As one Urban League official noted: "One board member and I were at dagger's point. He was interested in employment rather than education. And housing was controversial, too. He wanted me to keep my hands out of stuff like picketing. We had a running battle. My local board backed me. I had my convictions and got into it in spite of him."[56]

Some members of Urban League's board were especially active in trying to limit its alliances with the militants. They did not succeed in doing so, but the internal pressures on the League's education committee were strong. They always had to maneuver carefully between demands from militants, including those in NAACP, for more intervention and demands from their board of directors to play a more moderate role. They were thus under constant cross pressures and were sometimes negatively regarded by both sides. Their ability to continue supporting the movement was an indication of the committments of their education specialists to reform.

Urban League's bylaws prevented it from participating in any direct-action protests or demonstrations. For example, it didn't endorse the march on Washington until President Kennedy gave it his approval. Though such behavior might seemingly have estranged its education staff from the militants in the New York City civil rights movement, it rarely did. Urban League always maintained informal relations with all civil rights groups, often playing a mediating role between national organizations and local leaders. It supported Galamison's proposed boycott in 1960, and it endorsed the first boycott in 1964.[57] Most important, it never got polarized from Galamison the way that NAACP and the national CORE office did. This was due in large part to the role some of its education officials played in keeping communications lines open with all civil rights groups, trying to interpret the needs and strengths of each to the other.

Though Urban League was officially opposed to boycotts, its education officials attended as observers private meetings where boycott preparations were being made, and offered their support where possible.[58] They were able to some extent to interpret the movement to Urban League's board and top officials, some of whom were far removed from the ghetto and its problems.

One of the significant roles Urban League played, then, was to link diverse groups with one another, both within the Negro movement and between Negro and white organizations. The League also disseminated facts around which more militant demonstrations (more militant, that is, than the League could ever take part in directly) were conducted. In their own way, they were able to mobilize grassroots support and participation for desegregation proposals. Urban League's professional staff thus made an invaluable contribution to the movement. When Urban League decided to give up having a fulltime professional staff in the education field in 1965, the movement lost an important basis of strength.

Urban League has all but dropped out of the New York City school struggle since then, due in large part to pressures from its national office. It is in some respects ironic that though Urban League's national office exerted much more pressure on its local branches to withdraw from school controversies than did NAACP's, the New York office nevertheless was able to maintain amicable relations with all factions within the civil rights movement and play a meaningful supportive role in protest actions.

CORE. The relationship of CORE, the other national civil rights organizations, to the school desegregation movement was completely different from that of either NAACP or Urban League. This was largely a consequence of differences in its structure. Unlike NAACP, its arch rival, CORE has always had a very decentralized and confederated structure. There has been much more conflict between the national office and local branches and among the branches themselves. Furthermore, there was no rationalized and explicitly stated national policy on school matters such as NAACP had. CORE thus had no consistent program, it had no guidelines, and it tended to move into critical situations in somewhat unpredictable ways. It has never had any spokesman who could rally all the branches to a common position and represent a single, unified point of view.

There were other differences from NAACP as well. CORE had nowhere near the membership in New York City that NAACP had. One civil rights leader suggested that in early 1964 CORE had roughly three hundred members in New York City, compared with close to 30,000 in NAACP. At the same time, CORE tended to be much more militant than NAACP and was strongest in ghetto communities, just the areas where NAACP was weakest. Ironically, CORE was at the same time more subject to white liberal donor domination at the national office level than NAACP. Local CORE branches are generally much more suspicious of their national office, in regard to attempting not to offend particular donors, than are NAACP branches.[59]

On balance, CORE had not been too effective on the school desegregation issue in New York City. While particular local branches were quite militant and worked closely with Galamison, particularly the Brooklyn, Harlem (called New York), and Bronx branches, the fact that there were so many factions and that no single one had that many constituents, led the Board of Education and city officials to pay little heed to the possible impact of their protests. One civil rights leader related: "Your picture of CORE's position depends on who you talk to. You get a different one with every major figure there." Another noted: "CORE really floundered over the school issue. They are very volatile and quite as capable of tearing themselves apart as anyone else is."[60]

The combination of CORE's beginning as a loosely structured, confederated organization and the deep suspicion of many local branches of white liberal pressures on the national office thus gave CORE the character of many separate organizations. This, in turn, reduced its political effectiveness, except as a vehicle for mobilizing more grassroots support for local demonstrations. It has had limited power within the city, and has never been as close to top Board and city officials as have NAACP and Urban League. Its main interest had not been in bargaining and negotiation, anyway, but rather in effecting radical changes in the school system through public protests. The problem within the organization was one of reaching some agreement on what those changes should be.

City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools. The first major attempt to form a viable coalition among the various civil rights groups was the City-Wide Committee, set up in August 1963.[61] Its failure to work together and present a united front to the Board and city officials illustrates the many forces that have contributed so substantially to the political ineffectiveness of the civil rights movement in the city.

There was considerable uneasiness in the national offices of NAACP, Urban League, and CORE about even entering into such a coalition. NAACP and Urban League were concerned about becoming too identified with public demonstrations, and militant direct-action groups. In addition, NAACP had usually decided upon its actions in an autonomous manner. That was partly the reason it had been able to build itself into the strongest civil rights organization in the nation. Further, its officials did not want the organization to be seen as a follower of Galamison, and the press, perhaps deliberately, made it look that way. Finally, there were top officials and board members within NAACP who were simply committed to a different political strategy. They didn't believe in Galamison's form of militancy, and favored negotiation, bargaining, and legal approaches to the problem, as well as demonstrations.

CORE, on the other hand, had always pursued an actionist strategy, but its board and national office personnel had many doubts about underwriting this particular coalition. Some civil rights leaders suggested that national CORE resented being followers rather than leaders in a boycott action. Nevertheless, local education officials in these organizations, in much more direct communication with conditions in New York City, were allowed to prevail.

The doubts of the national office people were reinforced when Galamison began to follow what was generally defined within the movement as a unilateral strategy. His sharp exchanges with Board President James Donovan and his negativistic commentaries about the New York City school system reactivated those interests within the movement who either wanted him deposed as leader or wanted to withdraw completely from participation in the coalition. They interpreted his behavior as motivated by a desire for personal power. And every time he acted unilaterally and militantly, he increased the political strength of these officials who were finally able to swing their organizations to withdrawing from the Committee. He couldn't succeed without their support. Unfortunately for the movement, neither side could succeed without the other.

Yet neither side would give in to the other. The many long meetings where all were present, just after the first boycott, failed to produce any results. NAACP and CORE were worried about their autonomy, their image, their contributors, and Galamison's political abilities and motives. Galamison worried about NAACP's basic commitments. He interpreted the many plans to change the structure of the City-Wide Committee as a series of maneuvers to buy him out. The tragedy of the confrontations was that Galamison and NAACP did have similar commitments on the school desegregation issue, regardless of the personal and organizational needs that served to divide them. Yet these needs kept getting injected into the discussions. And Galamison and national civil rights organizations were never to protest together again, with the exception of a brief rapprochement of national CORE with Galamison in his walkout of the next year.[62]

The problem of how local civil rights groups can ever work with national organizations thus remains unresolved. Each faces imperatives that are incompatible with those of the other. National organizations relate to New York City problems in light of their national policies and strategies. They prefer going through structured channels to review and vote on particular actions. Their structured approach includes developing a plan, securing general agreement from many groups after doing so within their own organization, presenting the plan to the Board of Education and then, given its response, deciding what their strategy will be. And they have always had to be sensitive to the preferences of their branches and national office.

Social action groups whose strength is dependent on their grass-roots membership cannot easily proceed in such a fashion. They have the problem of retaining a large mass following. Their leaders often feel that demonstrations are one of the only ways to do so. And they fear that their constituents will become disinterested and even disaffected if reforms are not forthcoming. Furthermore, as entities, they have more freedom to plan protest actions rather quickly, without having to clear such actions with an established organization and board of directors. They often claim to be in closer touch with the masses than national organizations. All these points relate directly to the conflict between local and national civil rights groups in New York City. It is difficult to conceive of a set of relationships that might be more conducive to disunity than the ones that existed there on the school desegregation issue.

Indeed, the history of the school desegregation movement since the breakup of the City-Wide Committee was one of limited unity and effectiveness. Later boycotts were in part tests of power within the movement, as well as being protests against the Board of Education. Galamison was hoping through the second boycott, for example, to make such a show of strength that his capacity for leadership would be confirmed. One of the problems of the sceond boycott, however, was that divisions within the movement had been dramatized beforehand in the press. Furthermore, opposition groups had already shown their grassroots and citywide support. The Board and city officials were thus less intimidated by it than they were by the first boycott, and it became clear to Galamison that he would do well to wait awhile before leading another one.

Board Actions and Civil Rights Unity

The Board of Education, for its part, was in a position to capitalize on divisions within the civil rights coalition, much as managements could with rival union factions. It could easily "whip-saw" one faction against another, in this case the national civil rights leadership against the locals. Any public agency must develop strategies of defense in periods of mounting demands and criticism, and this was one of the strategies the Board of Education used. There was much debate at top levels within the Board over whether they should deal with national or local leaders. During the period when James Donovan was president, there were concerted attempts to divide national from local leaders. Sometimes, important announcements and communications were sent only to national leaders, excluding people like Galamison or Harlem Parents Committee representatives. At other times, private meetings were set up with national leaders, in the hope that some agreement could be made on limited reforms, playing the moderate elements in the movement off against the militants.[63]

NAACP officials were very experienced in such matters and had developed a rule about this kind of situation. It was that a national official should never attend a meeting without a local branch representative and never be used as a substitute for the local people. The Board of Education tried on a few occasions to gain the support of national officials for a particular plan, without consulting with local leaders. As one civil rights leader noted: "The Board did call a meeting with Wilkins, Farmer, and Whitney Young, but each took one other person with him." Another related: "James Donovan always wanted me to talk to Whitney Young or Wilkins. He always knew that the national office would take a more conservative approach." On a more general note one leader suggested: "When Galamison withdrew from NAACP in Brooklyn, he was bitter and he set out to out-militant the militant. The Board plays on these weaknesses to the hilt. I don't underestimate their ability to play both ends against the middle."[64]

In many cases, it wasn't even neccessary for the Board to engage in active efforts to divide the movement. All it had to do was to function as usual, which meant delaying for mant months before communicating its plans. Civil rights leaders would then become uncertain and confused as to the Board's commitments and would debate among themselves on what the dealys meant. The militants would argue that the Board was simply engaged in one more stalling tactic in the hope that grassroots pressure for change would wane. They would urge another boycott to show the Board that there still was discontent. The national civil rights organization officials would argue that the Board should be given more time to complete its investigations and that further demonstrations should await the release of its plan. They favored private communications and negotiations with the Board, indicating at the same time their demands for far-reaching plans. This was what happened in late 1964 and early 1965, with reference to Gross's plans.

Tactics And Strategies of Civil Rights Leaders

Though civil rights leaders faced many obstacles in their struggle to mobilize grassroots support, some of their own strategies may have contributed to their difficulties in this regard. Many civil rights leaders characterized some of the grassroots militants within the movement as "leaders without followers." They suggested from personal experience, and with some dismay, that the same small cadre of leaders and activists kept vying for control within the movement, without drawing in more moderate civil rights organizations and without actually mobilizing a large grassroots following. Some of the militants themselves characterized their many meetings at times as a "liberal monologue" where the same people ended up talking to each other rather than to a wider audience. As one experienced civil rights leader noted, with reference to a coalition that formed in early 1966: "Now, once more, a small cadre is attempting to take over. They will never be able to do anything. There are many newcomers and they know what they want to take place. These people (the militant leaders), have so far refused to learn from past experience."[65]

This is not just the view of the moderates within the movement. One militant Harlem leader, with an acute sense of appropriate political strategy, noted: "The trouble with the confederation has been the same, time and time again. The concentration of leadership, or the artificial formation of a few handpicked people always leads to the same old story. It's the same with the way the 'people's board' is foundering now. They're not going to get anywhere. There's no looking to the community, no quick recognition of leadership, no wish for changing or expanding leadership. They pull a big crowd on an issue, but it remains inert, not activated."[66]

The movement has gone through many stages, and it would be inappropriate to generalize too much from these observations of insiders. Indeed, members of the people's board, as well as their critics from within the minority group community, have begun to recognize the need for expanding the leadership base within the coalition. At the same time, this observation was valid for much of the period since Galamison's last shutdown in early 1965.

A small group of leaders, with more experience and sophistication than anybody else in the movement, has gone about the task of rebuilding the movement. They have not worked to broaden the base of leaders and activists and have not delegated power as much as some within the movement would like. This is not at all to say, as many Board officials and PA leaders do, that such leaders are not interested in education and are operating as "outside agitators." Quite the contrary, they know more about how reform has been scuttled and about the operations of the school system than most others within the movement. Their problem, in part, is one of being impatient with the Board's stalling tactics and of wanting to mobilize a movement as quickly as possible. They feel they are best qualified to do so. But in failing to broaden their leadership base, they cut themselves off, both from other local leaders and from the grassroots.

The old leadership are thus defined from within the movement as poor strategists. Much of this may be unjustified in view of the array of political forces that were against them in the past. Their ability to mobilize as much participation as they did in the two boycotts and one shutdown might be seen as a sign of effective leadership. But from within the movement, it no longer is seen as such.

Limited Followthrough

The political effectiveness of civil rights groups has been limited as well by certain of their strategies. One of these was the tendency to withdraw pressure and to limit protest after the Board had made one of its advanced policy statements or announced a desegregation plan. As I indicated earlier, the main resistance to reform came at the implementation stage, from within the school system itself. Boycotts, sit-ins, and other demonstrations had been effective in forcing the Board to develop plans. But then very little was done to implement them.

Some civil rights leaders did follow through, though there were not enough of them. Some Parents Workshop offocials, for example, took over tasks the Board had not undertaken. They told minority group parents about the schools to which their children could be transferred. They worked out the transportation routes. And they gave continued encouragement to parents to participate in the plan. Some civil rights leaders participated in the Ridgewood-Glendale situation, by appearing at the receiving schools and trying to encourage white mothers and youngsters to accept the incoming Negro children. In June of 1964, civil rights leaders collected systematic data on staff subversion of the Free Choice Transfer plan. They also worked to prepare communities for pairings in the schools where they were implemented.[67]

But there wasn't enough of this follow-up activity to assure better implementation, and for good reason. Civil rights groups had the most limited resources and staff. They had very little money with which to employ fulltime people to engage in such efforts. When they did employ professional people, as in the case of Urban League's monitoring of open enrollment, it helped their cause. But Urban League decided to abandon that activity. Technical evaluations and audits of Board programs are obviously not going to be done by parent associations or civil rights groups, but short of that there is much they can do to watchdog the implementation of Board programs. Some civil rights groups are actively engaged in such activity.

There have been differences of opinion within the movement about how involved its organizations should become in such monitoring activities. Some leaders have felt that it was the Board's responsibility to engage in such essential tasks as preparing community and school officials for desegregation plans, making sure that they were implemented, evaluating their implementation, and working to increase community participation and improve school-community relations. After all, it was argued, school officials are the educators, not civil rights groups. Proponents of this view believed that it was their main function to simply prod the Board to innovate more, through demonstrations if necessary. The other view was that demonstrating or negotiating for plans was not enough, that it was important to monitor and help in their implementation.

There is much to be said for this second position. The idea of such monitoring activity for civic groups is not new. The United Parents Association has been engaged in it for many years. They are quite effective at it, too, and they do it all with the help of volunteers. Furthermore political resistance is encountered in implementing plans than in having them mandated. It is a less visible politics and is often argued away by school officials to keep protest groups off balance. In any case, the monitoring view has come to prevail within the movement.

Morality and Conflict Strategies

Some of the strategies that civil rights groups used to project their demands for school desegregation also hurt their cause, or at least failed to help it. One was to appeal to the sense of morality or guilt of whites.[68] Such attempts to rouse the social conscience of the white community rarely worked. Civil rights leaders employed the usual arguments in this vein -- that desegregation is the law of the land, that Negro children do not learn and are psychologically damaged by a segregated school experience, that whites as well as Negroes can benefit from desegregation. The white community had its view of the morality of the situation - usually defined in terms of its constitutional rights, its children's interests, and the like. Plans that involved the mandatory transfer of children for desegregation were not seen as having any moral justification.[69] In the early stages of the conflict, some civil rights leaders held to the view that since New York City was such a "liberal" town, it might be possible to get many whites to see much merit in desegregation. It turned out not to be possible. Very few whites were persuaded. This is not to say that the effort shouldn't still be made. It should be, and with much more leadership and persuasion than Board and city officials exerted in the past. Appeals to anybody's sense of morality, however, may not be effective as a political strategy. Civil rights leaders see this quite clearly now.

A morality approach was often accompanied by a conflict strategy that didn't prove effective either. Civil rights groups often presented their demands in terms of the slogan of "racial balance," taking as self-evident the benefits that would accrue to whites as well as Negroes. Whites did not see the benefits to their children as self-evident.

They feared that standards would be lowered and were unwilling to risk giving up their elite status and "private" schools to find out whether or not their fears were justified.

The issue was thus posed as a Negro self-interest one, without many attempts being made to ease the fears of whites. This was much more the responsibility of the Board than of civil rights groups, but since the Board did little to fulfill that responsibility, civil rights leaders might have tried to do so more than they did. At times, they tended to categorize in the most negative terms all whites who resisted desegregation, sometimes accusing them of racist attitudes. The charge may have been quite valid in some cases, but to make it too openly and too generally was bad politics.

One example of this was a statement released to the press by leaders of the Conference for Quality Integrated Education, a coalition of Negro and white organizations, just before the PAT-sponsored boycott. The statement condemned all parents who supported PAT and the boycott as racist.[70] It further polarized the opposition and antagonized some moderate groups who were members of the conference.

Indeed, the main effects of this strategy of conflict were to alienate many white liberals and moderates and further polarize the opposition from civil rights groups. The nagative stereotyping that the strategy reflected led as well to other actions that hurt the movement. This outlook led to a cutting off of communicatinn with key city officials and further defeat for the school desegregation cause. Two elected officials we interviewed, for example, claimed to have strong sympathies with the school desegregation cause. They complained, however, that they received many more communications from the opposition than they did from civil rights groups. Our interviews with civil rights leaders suggested that they had given up on both officials as people who were beyond the fold and not worth contacting any further. This represented a misreading of the political situation. The fact that these officials had not taken public stands favorable to the civil rights position in the past was more a function of their sense of what their constituencies wanted than of their personal sentiments. To write them off as "typical white liberals" or as "sellouts" was not only wrong, it also was not good politics. In short, defining the controversy as a moral rather than political one, categorizing all people as either "committed" or "uncommited," and communicating mainly with the former, did little to mobilize support and power where they were most needed.

The tendency to lump and categorize all people who had not declared themselves on all occasions for the cause can be generalized to include civil rights groups' strategies for dealing with most white liberal organizations and interests. In the early stages of the conflict over pairings (late 1963 and 1964), there was an attempt to reach out and widen the organizational base of the emerging coalition. Lengthy meetings were arranged with officials of such organizations as PEA. They usually came to nothing; the officials kept seeing the civil rights groups as captives of such militants as Galamison and Harlem Parents Committee representatives.

One of the groups with which the civil rights groups never aligned was the powerful teachers union, the United Federation of Teachers. Civil rights groups polarized from the union on several issues -- the transfer of teachers to ghetto schools, providing a bonus system for ghetto teachers, and community participation and control. The union was pushing for more job rights for teachers,and minority group parents, especially, felt that this was against the interests of their children.

The UFT was certainly not a civil rights group, and it never will be. But teachers and parents have had many interests in common, and since this union had a progressive leadership, there might have been more collaboration than there was. Throughout the 1966-67 school year, the union staged many demonstrations in collaboration with parents for better services and conditions at ghetto schools.[71] Previously, the union had honored the first boycott by not condemning any teacher who refused to walk across the picket line. Yet no rapprochement between the teachers union and ghetto parents ever took place, nor does one seem likely in the near future. If anything, the gulf between them may be wider now than in the past, partly because community control plans are perceived by teachers as a threat to their status and autonomy.

There is much to be gained in such an alliance, perhaps more so for parents than for teacher, since the union is likely to become progressively more powerful. If some parent group demands were built into the collective bargaining contract of the union with the Board, there would be much less likelihood of subversion. Union officials have a vast experience with principals and district superintendents subverting and redefining headquarters directives. They have a large, powerful organization to help monitor the implementation of innovations. It is difficult to imagine what losses would accrue to civil rights groups from limited alliances with the union on matters where they had common interests. Each side would have to negotiate the other into compromising some of its goals, but the benefits to each might more than compensate for this. The union will continue to increase its power, even without the parents, but it is difficult to see how the latter can prevail in affecting key Board decisions without the union.

The difference between a conflict strategy and what might appropriately be labelled a "consensus" strategy is that, in following the latter, one has somewhat greater tolerance for the maintenance needs and organizational imperatives of groups that choose to take more moderate positions. One accepts and works within such realities as the fact that NAACP and Urban League are going to be less action-oriented than the civil rights movement and the United Federation of Teachers more oriented to the needs of its organization and of teachers than to the needs of the movement. Maintaining such a tolerance, in turn, makes it easier to keep a viable coalition by keeping communications open and accepting each organization on its own terms.

One aspect of a "consensus" strategy that might reap more dividends for protest groups is its emphasis on integrative symbols that do not alienate and polarize other groups from the movement. However offensive the term consensus politics is to militant protest groups, it need not take on the pejorative "whichever way the wind is blowing" connotations they ascribe to it. There are a few specific tactics that might be used in the pursuit of such a strategy. One would be to present new ideas in terms of benefits that cannot be responded to negatively by conservative white groups. The educational park is one such new idea. It might be discredited in short order, if presented mainly as a technique for desegregation. It has to be justified on economic grounds (a more efficient use of the educational tax dollar), on administrative grounds (helping to decentralize and to provide for more accountability and performance measures), on quality grounds (providing many more services on a centralized basis to many more children), as well as a desegregation device.

Another tactic, developed in New York City as well as around the nation by Mr. Irving Levine of the American Jewish Committee, is what its author refers to as a technological approach. Levine has, in fact, used this as a device to mobilize support for the educational park. It involves showing parents and citizens the many benefits they will reap in the form of federal monies and new instructional devices if they adopt such innovations as parks and develop some ingenuity in relating them to federal legislation that qualifies urban centers for money when they undertake particular programs. Levine has pointed out the wide variety of federal programs under which a school district could apply for money if it adopted such innovations as parks. Other urban affairs specialists have also worked on this approach as a tactic.[72]

This approach depoliticizes and depolarizes the community on innovations that might lead to community conflict and resistance. It is in striking contrast to the conflict approach of civil rights groups in the period just ended. When innovations are presented with such a set of inducements, it is difficult to be against them. Ultra-conservative groups will always be against them. They might well be isolated, however, as a minority who are against "spending more money on our children's education," by a large coalition of moderate and liberal whites along with Negro and Puerto Rican groups.

A Totalism, No-Win Strategy

A related approach of civil rights leaders during the height of the controversy over desegregation was to set very advanced goals, rarely waver from them except perhaps to raise them still higher, and then suffer defeat after defeat as potential allies fell away. Sometimes these objectives were meant to serve as the basis for bargaining rather than as a literal expression of goals. Often, however, the hard-line approach was interpreted in the most negative light, as when such widely read education reporters as Fred Hechinger of the New York Times frequently referred to civil rights demands for "instant integration."

Yet, there was, in fact, a sense in which civil rights groups spent more time arguing the merits of idealistic plans -- e.g., educational parks throughout the city -- than they did in hard bargaining for more limited objectives. There were a number of consequences of taking a hard line and not wanting to retreat from it. One was that the movement suffered from continuing demoralization, even among the most dogged and committed activists. It is difficult to sustain a movement when the goals are set so high that no action by the public agency or target of attack is defined as a victory.

Another consequence of setting unrealistically high goals and maintaining them throughout is that the opposition becomes even more active and mobilizes for a long, difficult struggle. Meanwhile, the moderates and the liberal whites as well find it difficult to join, and the militants are once more isolated from the rest of the community, left only to talk to themselves.

A further related error had to do with the way in which civil rights demands were actually presented. Some militants within the civil rights movement, for example, had at one time categorized all those groups that were against pairings as "sellouts" and bigots. Then, several months later, these same civil rights leaders espoused a more advanced set of plans, as spelled out in the Allen Report, and labelled those people who were struggling to make the pairings work as naively fixated on passe techniques. The same pattern existed when civil rights leaders changed their demands on the question of where new high schools should be located. At one time, they wanted high schools located in the ghetto. Later, they wanted them out. Now they want them in again.[73]

All these seemingly contradictory demands can be justified for the time in which they were made. That is not the point. The point is that a degree of dogmatism sometimes appeared in their presentation, with some civil rights leaders showing some rigidity in the manner in which they characterized the other side. Some potential white allies were alienated by this approach.

A few generalizations thus emerge from the experiences of civil rights groups in their long struggle for desegregation and better quality education in New York City. More broadly based grassroots organization is essential. So is a more broadly based leadership. Small cadres will never convince the Board of their strength without a large constituency and some powerful allies. A political and bargaining rather than a morality orientation must prevail. Appeals to morality have moved few people, and to be successful the movement must effect a convergence of its own self-interest with that of powerful groups. The union is one of the most important of such groups. Demonstrations still have much value, when used selectively, but strong community representation and mobilization are essential. In addition to demonstrations, quid pro quos, even with groups that had previously been defined as "the other camp," might well be effected.

Most important of all, consensus strategies and tactics may win some important victories. The more that they can help to "unfreeze" the lower- and lower-middle-class white community from its many fears about losing school services to Negroes and about a lowering of standards, the more likely the chance for success.

Lest this entire discussion be taken as placing too much of a burden of responsibility on the civil rights movement for its limited political resources between reform and status quo oriented interests. The civil rights movement did not have nearly the money, the personnel, or the inside access to Board and city officials that moderate and opposition groups had. This has made the struggle that much more difficult.

Furthermore, the most powerful civil rights organizations, the NAACP and Urban League, are multipurpose organizations. School desegregation was only one item on their agendas, and they had many internal debates as to how to allocate their limited resources on such problems as housing, employment, and voter registration, as well as schools. The location of their national offices in New York City further exacerbated the problem of mobilizing their strong support on school controversies.

Finally, the Board of Education itself was a formidable foe. The inefficiencies of its own operation, the power of its inbred professional staff, and its insulation from the community made the task of effecting any major changes a very difficult one.

The civil rights movement in New York City thus functions under the most trying conditions. While its strategies might well be improved, perhaps in part along the lines I have suggested, other participants as well would have to push for reform. In brief, there would have to be a fundamental alteration in the balance of political power in the city on public education matters. The Board has not functioned alone as an adversary to change oriented groups. It has had continued support of a number of moderate organizations like PEA, UPA, and various borough-wide and local PAs and PTAs: I turn to a consideration of these groups in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

THE MODERATES

Even though the neighborhood school opposition was well mobilized and Negro and white liberal groups only partially so, there might well have been more movement, given New York City's progressive traditions, had the city's powerful moderate organizations provided some pressure and support for desegregation. But moderate organizations, holding the balance of power on the issue, did little to further the school desegregation cause. This had great significance, since the moderates were much more influential in shaping Board decisions than either of the main contending groups --the neighborhood school movement or civil rights organizations.

The most powerful moderate groups are the United Parents Association (UPA), representing as many as 430 local parent associations and 400,000 mothers and fathers throughout the city; the Public Education Association (PEA), representing through its board and coordinating committee some of the most influential professional and civic groups in the city (Citizens Budget Commission, New York City Bar Association, Citizens Union, League for Industrial Democracy, Men's and Women's City Clubs); and various borough or citywide parent groups. These groups represent the professional, status, and civic elites in the city. And they have close ties both with one another and with top city and Board officials.[1]

The influence of these groups was much less visible than that of civil rights or neighborhood school groups. They received considerably less press coverage. And since their actions did not include boycotts and demonstrations and therefore did not make for sensationalism and drama in reporting much of the influence they did exert over Board decisions was known mainly to informed insiders.[2]

A number of generalizations can be made about the values, the power and the significance of these organizations in shaping the Board of Education's decisions on school desegregation. Collectively, the organizations symbolized a pattern of white, middle- and upper-middle-class, predominantly Jewish and Protestant control of the New York City school system. PEA and UPA especially had both become highly politicized and had built up their private access to Board and city officials through years of experience. Indeed, they had a privileged access to Board and city officials of a kind that was generally denied to civil rights and integrationist organizations. Only Urban League and NAACP officials could get private hearings, and their influence was limited.[3]

In many respects, PEA and UPA were all but extensions of the lay Board. They participated directly in its policy deliberations and were regarded by Board members as the most professional, the most informed, and the most public-oriented civic groups in the city. They had the same kind of influence with the mayor. UPA was the more influential of the two, partly because of their broad-based representation. As one top civic group official noted: "The Board is a highly political structure. They have their roster of ins and outs. UPA is one of those ins. They have always had a direct relationship with all levels of the structure. They are absolutely politically oriented. They operate politically. Out in the open or under cover, they act like the politician on the beat. They use their numbers boldly, politically. PEA is respected, but they're not like UPA. They don't have the troops. UPA got power by helping Wagner in his campaign. They can always get in. When they call up to see someone there, they jump around."

Events relating to public hearings indicated how much the lay Board relied on the moderates for advice and political support. Prior to most public hearings there was usually a private meeting that representatives of all these groups would attend. They might also be called on individually as well. They were, in a word, the lay Board's principal source of information, advice, criticism, and political support. Initiative for such exchanges came from both sides.

The actual scheduling of groups to speak in the public hearings further reflected this patterns. Citywide moderate organizations were always first on the list. As one lay Board member said: "We find it hard to listen after the groups give their presentation at the beginning. After we hear from UPA, PEA, CCC (The Citizens Committee for Children) and National Congress of Parents and Teachers, we've heard all the good, new ideas we're going to hear, and it's a parade after that. We hear everybody who wants to speak, but everybody gets very tired after the hearings drag on, and little that's new comes out after these groups have had their say. That's why we put them at the beginning."

To speak of a pattern of middle class control of the New York City school system, despite the fact that 50 per cent of its pupils are from low income Negro and Puerto Rican families, is quite accurate. The reasons for the perpetuation of this pattern are important to explore. Why, for example, do civil rights organizations not have nearly the access and power of these other, more moderate groups.

One reason has been that there was more factionalism among civil rights organizations than among the moderates, and the Board was not always certain who was speaking for whom in the Negro and Puerto Rican community. The moderates, on the other hand, usually have a clearly stated position on which they all generally agree. And it is relatively easy for the Board to discern the large constituencies or citywide organizations that the moderates represented.

Another and perhaps more important reason was that civil rights groups did not have anywhere near the money, professional staff, facilities, or accumulated experience in dealing with the Board that the moderates had. This limited their ability to monitor effectively the day-to-day operations of the school system and check on the degree to which the Board's policy statements were implemented.

Contrast this pattern with the commitments and resources of the moderates . Both UPA and PEA are primarily education-oriented organizations and devote virtually all their resources to public school matters. Both are affluent enough to have either fulltime staff professionals or volunteers who spend all their time just on school affairs. And both have been involved in pressure group and watchdog activity in the public education field for many decades. Their professional staff is experienced in dealing with the Board, knows much about the system's operations, and is especially cognizant of the many strategies of defense that Board of Education officials use when confronted with citizen groups, which make demands on the system for more services. It is little wonder, then, that at present they are much more powerful than civil rights or other integration-minded organizations.

Their political resources include even more than money, staff, facilities, and accumulated experience. They include the support of many local and citywide organizations as well. Since UPA represents up to 400,000 parents throughout the city, most of whom generally endorse its policy statements, the Board cannot ignore the organization. UPA officials won't let it, though they have little to fear that it will. One of the few major Board programs in recent years that was in direct contradititction to UPA demands was its use of Title I monies. Much more of the funds went to parochial school pupils and on a nonshared basis than UPA and many other public school groups wanted.[4] Even in that instance, however, UPA, in collaboration with most civic groups, has forced the Board to recast its programs for spending these monies.

A final political resource of moderate groups is their representation on the selection board that nominates people to serve on the Board of Education. The Public Education Association, the Citizens Union, the Citizens Budget Commission, the Commerce and Industry Association, and the Association of the Bar of the City of New York are among the members of that panel. PEA is one of the panel's most informed and influential members, and most of these other organizations are represented either in its coordinating committee or on its board.

The privileged access and resources of moderate groups have generally been used to forward demands that were not always the same as those of integrationist groups. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the values and goals of the school desegregation movement were only occasionally those of moderate groups. UPA, and PEA officials claim that they are interested in forwarding desegregation plans but not on the scale that civil rights groups would like, nor with the rapid implementation that has been demanded.

In the early years of the desegregation struggle, the moderates were somewhat more supportive of civil rights demands than they have been since the pairing controversy. PEA, for example, was the organization that sponsored the first major study on segregation and quality education in New York City schools.[5] The findings of that study were quite radical in their implications. But PEA never followed through on its report. In 1959, for example, it came out in opposition to Judge Justine Polier's decision that, since the teaching staff in segregated Harlem schools was inferior to that in white schools, parents would be allowed to transfer their children out. Her decision was based on the spirit, if not the precise findings, of the PEA report.

The same lack of followthrough was characteristic of UPA. It helped to press the Board for fringe area schools and for some rezoning.

Yet by 1960, even UPA was starting to backtrack on open enrollment. As one informed civil rights leader with close ties to UPA noted: "This whole business of attacking the problem of school segregation split the white community wide open. We found we couldn't depend on any white liberals to carry on our battle. The Citizens Committee for Children, the United Parents Association, the Public Education Association were all good allies, but we had to carry through on our own and this was a good thing in the long run. The so-called white liberals were very divided on issues like busing and open enrollment. The civil rights groups could mobilize the whites once we got out there in front, but we couldn't really depend on them to see our point of view in the most basic terms of equality."

All the moderate organizations were caught in the ambivalent position of favoring both quality and equality, but of not wanting to sacrifice the former for the latter. They feared that desegregation might lead to a decline in quality, and they were afraid of supporting many desegregation plans to test the validity of their fears. They ended straddling the fence on the issue, never coming out openly and opposing any desegregation plans, but never really supporting them strongly either. As one informant with ties to all camps related: "They never discussed the issue of open enrollment per se, but always latched on to auxiliary issues. That's the way these groups --UPA, PEA and CCC-- would express themselves."

PEA officials, for example, never discussed the merits of the Board's particular pairing plans until after they were finally announced.

Neither did they discuss the merits of pairing in general as a desegregation technique for New York City. Instead, they debated with civil rights leaders on the issue of "long distance busing," much like the neighborhood school spokesmen did. Long distance busing was not at issue, however, either in the Board's projected pairings that were later dropped or in pairings as a desegregation technique. Pairings invariably involved the rezoning of contiguous schools in fringe areas or along the racial frontier.

UPA took a similar position on busing. As one civic leader related: "UPA also really played politics with that busing issue. The middle class women were not straight on the busing issue themselves and couldn't be effective as leaders. They always said they were for integration but were adamantly opposed to long distance busing. Now long distance busing was never at issue. That was just a way to label it so as to kill integration." Like most moderate organizations, UPA often took the position that many new desegregation concepts had not been clarified, nor had the problems of implementing them been worked out in advance. These organizations thus opted for limited local experiments to see if particular plans would really work. The Board encouraged and welcomed such an approach.

The moderates were concerned with more than a decline in quality. They also feared that if desegregation plans were implemented on any scale or too rapidly, this would lead to a further intensification of white parent opposition and to increasing withdrawals of white pupils. They stressed the importance, then, of planning, of orderly implementation, and of gradualism in the pursuit of desegregation. Furthermore, they gave other goals a higher priority--for example, increased funds, more services for schools in transition, teacher training, neighborhood school centers, and more citizen participation in school affairs. They favored compensatory programs for ghetto schools--Operation Head Start, all day neighborhood schools, More Effective Schools--as the strategy to follow. They felt that there would be more chance for integration when quality education was provided, and they were especially concerned with stabilizing schools and communities as a way to get more desegregation.

The main political effect of the moderates' position was to dilute the impact of civil rights groups' demands for desegregation. The moderates thus strengthened the neighborhood school opposition by contributing to Board inaction. Their refusal to take a strong stand in favor of desegregation had the effect of their taking a stand against it. In heeding the moderates' plea that it move ahead with caution on any new desegregation plans, the Board gave more confidence than might otherwise have been the case to those school officials and civic groups who wanted to prevent desegregation. The moderates also helped legitimate the Board's hesitancy and limited plans by suggesting that only those plans that were "educationally sound" would be implemented.

The moderates' strategy advice to integrationist groups and the Board that they should not hold too many public meetings around controversial plans may have further contributed to the strength of those who opposed desegregation. There is much to be said in defense of the notion that public meetings only stir up community tensions. But the Board rarely met with concerned local groups at the peak of the controversy over pairing, and such groups became even more concerned than they had been about the Board's intentions to desegregate their schools and bus their children into Negro communities. The Board met mainly with the moderates rather than with either rights or neighborhood school opposition groups, further contributing to the latters' alienation and sense of powerlessness.

Since the moderates did have so much power, it is important to know more about how this power was exercised and what interests it served. I will discuss these matters with reference to the actions of UPA and PEA, the two most influential moderate organizations. Their positions on the desegregation issue were quite similar, but there were important differences in the nature of these organizations that merit discussion.

United Parents Association (UPA)

UPA as one of the most influential civic groups in New York City used its power to represent the interests of white and minority group (middle class and middle-class aspiring Negro and Puerto Rican) parents to block any attempts by civil rights groups to press the Board for more rapid desegregation on a broad scale. It always exercised its power in "private" rather than "public" settings. Many civil rights and liberal white activists were not completely aware of UPA's influence and partly for that reason did little to effectively counter it.

One of the keys to an understanding of UPA's role comes from a comparison of its position on desegregation with that of the Board. The two positions were virtually the same throughout the desegregation controversy. Several informants both inside and outside the Board noted that the Board always consulted with UPA officials and waited for them to react before making any final decisions on desegregation or other programs. The Board's perceptions of grassroots opinion were influenced by reports from UPA officials, despite the fact that their knowledge of the mood of ghetto communities was limited.

The following incidents illustrate the extent of UPA's influence with the Board. They are taken from UPA statements or from reports delivered at its delegate assembly meetings.

(1) Mrs. Florence Flast, UPA president, at the November 1, 1965, meeting mentioned her letter to Superintendent Donovan of October 13, calling attention to serious staff and organizational problems in the junior high schools. UPA's complaint was based on its study of sixth and ninth grade shifts and was well documented. Donovan promised to take steps. She had then sent him a list of schools, their unfilled positions, and their lost services. The Board subsequently hired 214 new teachers and advertised extensively for further teachers, and combined three assignment bureaus at headquarters.

(2) Mrs. Flast, at the same meeting, reported that UPA officials would have their "usual" discussion meeting on the capital budget with Dr. Adrian Blumenfeld and other Board members prior to the public hearings. Civil rights groups never had that kind of access.

(3) One top ranking UPA official informed us that "we have regular liaison meetings with Donovan once a month. And Harold Siegel, our former executive secretary, is now an executive assistant to the lay Board."

(4) Before any open hearings on educational parks, the so-called alphabet groups (UPA was one of them) were called to the Board and "consulted" on their views regarding the desirability of setting up parks as a technique for desegregation and upgrading of quality. Several expressed considerable scepticism about the utility of parks for New York City, and Mr. Siegel of UPA was one of the leading sceptics.

(5) On a more general note, Mrs. Flast, describing UPA's stature in her annual report of May 1965, wrote the following:

> The press coverage has been excellent this year and references to UPA in the dailies have progressed from "the largest group of its kind in the metropolitan area" to the "influential United Parents Association," and "the powerful United Parents Associations."

This was an accurate characterization of the organization.

Though I have suggested that UPA, broadly speaking, is a status quo, tradition-oriented organization, this judgment has to be interpreted in a broader perspective that goes beyond New York City. UPA was generally "progressive" on some issues, and was certainly so when compared with many parent associations throughout the nation. It should not be lumped with the wide range of fiscally conservative parent groups in small towns and suburban communities who perennially vote down school bond issues and protest against higher taxes for public schools. On the contrary, one of UPA's major activities has been to justify the Board's pleas for increases in its budget to provide for more schools and services. It has led the fight in New York City in this regard. It joins the pilgrimage to Albany every year to ask for more state monies. Furthermore, on matters of upgrading the quality of education, UPA is quite progressive and militant. And they provide the important function, in addition, of doing careful evaluations of the programs and plans the Board does implement.

My judgment that they are tradition-bound comes from what I take to be the recent radical change, especially in large urban centers, in the public and private debate as to the aims of public education in America. The issues of quality vs. equality, of local neighborhood vs. consolidated schools, and of community participation and control have all come to the fore in the past few years, making obsolete most of the old standards and positions. Relative to the dialogues conducted in the 1950's as to the nature and goals of public education, UPA was a reform-oriented organization, with a grassroots base and research operation surpassed by no other equivalent organization of parents in the nation.

Their positions on major issues in the mid 1960's, however, have lacked a sense of realism or awareness of the challenges that public education now confronts. Relative to such new challenges, and to the search for answers to legitimate questions about the adequacy of public education as an institution to deal with such social changes as the civil rights revolution, automation, urbanization and poverty, UPA is far behind.

I have chosen to label its "far behindness" as a kind of traditional middle class, individualistic outlook. It sees solutions not from any radical changes in the structure of the New York City school system, but rather from vast increases in services within the existing structure. It may well be oriented toward the perpetuation of a system whose present structure, codes, and operations are no longer functional.

There is a close parallel between the differences in outlook of UPA and protest groups and those of the traditional "welfare establishment" caseworker settlement house approaches to poverty in contrast to current community action approaches. The UPA and traditional social work approaches to problems of poverty and education are not institutional and structural ones, though the problems are. Instead, they aim for a kind of "moral uplift" within existing structures by adding more services. They attempt to build "ego strength" and higher aspirations without changing in any fundamental way the conditions that have given rise to the many pathologies the older approaches are designed to combat. Since the problems of educational decline and poverty in large metropolitan centers like New York City are largely structural and demand radical structural changes for their solution, approaches such as those of UPA simply will not work. And it may indeed be ironic that the very organizations that are so oriented toward fiscal conservatism and administrative efficiency may turn out to be the ones who support the most wasteful solutions of all. There may well be some longer-run efficiencies and savings in what seem in the short run to be costly and radical proposals for change. UPA and other moderate organizations have failed to consider this possibility.

Yet the very factors that have prevented UPA from favoring any dramatic action supporting desegregation and other reforms --its grassroots orientation, its close, informal relations with Board and city officials-- might just as easily provide a level for reform in the future. UPA is a membership-dominated organization, and the actions of its executive board, carried out by its headquarters staff, reflect the members' interests. One of the hopes of civil rights groups would be to participate more than they have in local parent associations and effect a change in attitude from the grassroots up to the UPA executive board. Since the Board of Education uses UPA as one of its main sources for information about parent opinion, ghetto parents would do well to elect their candidates as representatives to the UPA delegate assembly. This was how the progressive, reform-minded, middle class Jewish parents proceeded in the 1930's and 1940's. They have the power now in UPA, and it will be difficult to unseat them, but the change is bound to come. There is nothing inevitable or irrevocable about UPA's commitments.

Public Education Association (PEA)

The other powerful moderate organization was the Public Education Association, a small, elite group that was spawned by the New York City reform movement in 1895. PEA's main purpose has been to advance the cause of reform in the city s public school system through pressing for administrative efficiency and professionalism, and through protecting professional educators from outside "political" pressures. As Sol Cohen points out in his historical study of PEA, it represented the "good government" point of view in public education. As he also points out, it showed all the inconsistencies of most good government organizations which mask their self-interest pressure group activity in a public interest ideology.[6]

Until school desegregation became such a contested issue, PEA was generally regarded as taking very progressive positions on most public education controversies. They were a "service-expansion" oriented organization, in much the same sense as was UPA. They had a particular interest in the education and assimilation of the "tenement child" during a period of substantial in-migration of ethnic minorities to New York City--1890's through 1920's. They were particularly interested in transforming the public school system into a kind of multipurpose, child welfare agency through the creation of after school neighborhood centers and through merging many child welfare institutions into a more coordinated program.

In a word, many of the progressive public education causes of the early 20th century--all day neighborhood schools, extending special services to immigrant children and the poor, prevention of juvenile delinquency and social maladjustment, making public schools into all-purpose social institutions--were also PEA's causes. By the standards of a radical view of society, PEA might be characterized as having an elitist, noblesse oblige approach to these problems. Nevertheless, they devoted much of their organizational resources to a betterment of the poor and of new ethnic migrants. Their progressivism was the middle class kind that had contributed to much municipal reform during this period.

It was in this progressive, reformist spirit that PEA first related to the school desegregation problem. Its 1955 study on the extent of segregation in the New York City schools and on the differences in quality between segregated minority group schools and predominantly white schools was an extension of its earlier work.[7] Since then, however, PEA's commitments to reform, at least on the desegregation issue, and at times on other issues as well, have been moderate and selective.

Since 1959, when PEA supported the Board of Education in its protest against Judge Justine Polier's decision that Negro parents in Harlem were justified in keeping their children out of "inferior" schools, PEA's positions on desegregation issues have been much like that of UPA. As one PEA official related: "Our positions are much the same as those of UPA. Since we are a citywide organization with no local branches, we rely on UPA for grassroots information and activity."

PEA has supported some desegregation reforms and in a few instances has led the struggle for their implementation. It did a lengthy study, for example, in 1962, of the vocational and academic high schools and pushed the Board of Education to eliminate most vocational high schools whose curricula had become increasingly dated in a rapidly automating economy. It correctly pointed out that these schools were a dumping groupd for Negro and Puerto Rican pupils.[8] In an October 1963 document, Reorganizing Secondary Education in New York City, it referred to a pattern of "unintentional social stratification and de facto segregation as a result of the dual high school system."

Though some civil rights and liberal white leaders would have preferred that the term "unintentional"be dropped,or at least the first two letters, this report furthered their interests.

The fact is that PEA has had and continues to have a strong commitment to pressing the Board to reorganize the high schools and eliminate de facto segregation by race and class at that level. It is especially strong in its criticism of the general education curriculum in the academic high school and refers to this program as "little more than a holding operation."[9] The program serves lower class Negro and Puerto Rican pupils primarily and fails to train them for anything either future schooling or jobs. PEA has pushed for an elimination of this program and the establishment instead of a four-year program comprehensive high school. It also has worked to establish post high school programs and job training centers. All these efforts certainly put it in the reformist camp.

The same can be said of its decentralization proposals, all of which now accept as valid the claims of ghetto parents about the unresponsiveness of the system to community grievances and needs. PEA's proposals ask for the authority for the selection of district superintendents and principals to be vested in local school boards that would be broadly representative of the communities they serve. As one PEA statement recommends: "We believe that the way to decentralize the school system is to give local community representatives a sense of participation in the critical decisions to be made with respect to their public schools. Certainly the appointment of school principals and the superintendent are the most important acts in relation to the well-being and improvement of district schools, and present and potential board members are bound to recognize this."[10]

The statement even goes so far as to suggest that new district superintendents may well be demanded. This is precisely the view of many minority group and white parents. The statement comments: "It has been our feeling that the problem will be to get district superintendents willing to take the full measure of risks that go with leadership. A new breed of superintendent as well as strong local school boards will be necessary and the Board of Education should be prepared to find or develop them." This again places PEA on the side of the many parent groups who have protested since the IS 201 controversy for much more local community participation and control.

PEA's other activities on behalf of causes minority groups favor include its continued lobbying effort in the state legislature against enactment of any of the numerous "neighborhood school" bills that have been introduced. Such bills have come up at every session since 1963, when the issue of "mandatory busing" first became so controversial. Every proposed bill was defeated, and PEA's marshalling of all its resources in this struggle helped to ensure that such defeats took place.

One may wonder, then, why I have placed PEA in the moderate camp. Besides the fact that its officials place it there, PEA's actions on the desegregation issue were in opposition to civil rights demands at many points, just as UPA's were. It opposed more rapid and citywide desegregation for all the same reasons that UPA did. It saw desegregation as important, but not to the exclusion of such quality considerations as reduced class size, teacher and staff retraining and preschool programs for minority group children. It kept pointing up the many "costs" and "risks" inherent in rapid, citywide desegregation, namely, lowered standards, a white exodus, mandatory long distance busing, and potential chaos in implementation. As one top official noted: "We need a better mixing of ethnic groups, to be brought about in every way possible. But 'possible' means that you don't do some things."

The strategy PEA urged on the Board was one of "orderly change" taking into account the inequities that minority group pupils have faced, and rectifying them in a reasonable way. It supported open enrollment, limited pairings, and rezoning. It was very hesitant, as was UPA, to support such techniques as educational complexes and parks. The main strategy it recommended was a compensatory one that would bring minority group pupils up to a level where they could compete on a par with white middle class pupils. This, PEA argued, would help facilitate desegregation in the long run by posing less of a threat to standards, causing less fear among whites that it would, and creating fewer tensions among minority group pupils in desegregating schools. PEA officials often cited Dr. Kenneth Clark as an example of one Negro leader whose research and thinking buttressed their own position.

Its view, then, was that the problems of desegregation and quality, though related, should be considered separately. It felt that much progress could be made toward equality of opportunity by saturating ghetto schools with services. It was very supportive of "head start" programs and was in favor of extending them into the elementary grades. Long before Head Start had become a reality, PEA had sponsored a teacher aide and parent volunteer program to improve instruction in ghetto schools. Such a program was in keeping with the philanthropic and child welfare traditions of PEA. All these strategies, it must be noted, were in conflict with those of many civil rights groups.

Events surrounding PEA's estrangement from civil rights groups indicate the many difficulties of maintaining a continuing alliance during the heat of the desegregation controversy from late 1963 through 1966. Top PEA officials' public statements on the "busing" issue immediately labeled the organization as part of the other camp.[11] Opposition to "long distance busing" had become the rallying cry for all the militant opposition groups and was the slogan, along with that of the "neighborhood school" that they used most successfully in mobilizing their large following. PEA was opposed to the goals and tactics of the neighborhood school movement. Indeed, its top officials referred to this movement as "near bigots," as New York City's version of"white citizens councils," and as spreading "the big lie."

Yet, on this issue, PEA placed themselves on the neighborhood school side. As I have indicated, this was unfortunate, because busing was in reality a nonissue, raised by the opposition as a technique for reinforceing white parent fears and to divert attention away from some of the realities of the desegregation problem.

PEA spokesmen nevertheless took a public position on busing that enabled civil rights groups to lump their organization with the militant opposition and this contributed to a further estrangement between the moderates and the civil rights movement. This public position may have partially misrepresented PEA's commitments and sympathies at a time when unity between civil rights groups and moderates was sorely needed. Some Board members and officials in PEA recognized this, but they were overruled.

Most PEA officials felt that the monies that might have to be spent on busing might better be spent on upgrading and improving classroom instruction especially for minority group children. It was in this sense that they argued that exclusive or major attention by civil rights groups to "racial balance" as a goal might defeat their efforts both at increasing desegregation and upgrading quality.

This notion that desegregation plans might divert scarce school funds away from what they saw as more essential quality concerns was basic to PEA's position. It reflected in this regard the fiscal conservatism of their organization's elite board and of some of its professional staff. While these officials had always pushed the Board of Education for an expansion of services and continually supported it in its attempts to secure more money, they were not about to support what they referred to as "untested and unvalidated" plans, forced on the Board by special interest pressure groups whose leaders had no professional competence to assess the educational merits of such plans. PEA did not take the position that there might be greater longrun costs in maintaining segregated neighborhood schools. Neither did it dramatize the fact that the Board was running an inefficient operation and might have pruned many poorly formulated programs from its budget through administrative and personnel reforms.

In fact, PEA's public position was quite the contrary. Perhaps more than any other civic group, it had supported the Board's annual request for additional funds. There was an inconsistency in PEA's thinking on this matter, in that more money spent in the same traditional ways, for programs implemented by an organization whose structure and procedures were archaic, would not promote either educational reform or administrative efficiency. In fact, it might well solidify archaic and inefficient procedures.

PEA's own studies on the Board's budgetary planning, such as it was, and on the Board's continued failure in recent years to give any public accounting as to how it allocated its funds, should have provided more than enough documentation for the point that more money alone would not solve the system's problems and might make them worse.[12] PEA has, to be sure, pushed for some administrative changes in personnel procedures and for decentralization. Yet it never chose to make organizational and administrative matters (budgetary, accounting, evaluation) the public issue they should well have become. In this sense, it did not lead the fight for greater efficiency even as it castigated civil rights groups for demanding fiscally questionable reforms. Its requests for school monies, unaccompanied by a program to ensure that the monies were spent in the most efficient and imaginative manner, and that an accounting of how they were spent be made public, were at least as questionable as demands of civil rights groups for major desegregation plans.

PEA became further estranged from civil rights groups on the matter of school funds. Its officials were upset when major civil rights leaders refused to join PEA in their pleas for more state aid. The answer civil rights leaders invariably gave for refusing to join this effort was that campaigning for more money to perpetuate and expand segregated education was in direct conflict with all their goals. They also suggested that desegregation could be mandated in some fringe areas without additional money. Regardless of the merits of these arguments (though I believe that the first, especially, has much merit), the issue further alienated PEA and civil rights leaders from one another.

The tendency on the part of PEA and other moderate leaders to define most public protest as led by "outside agitators" and as not representative of parent sentiment was quite common. It had important political consequences, since it shaped and reinforced the mass media's, the Board's and many top city officials' perceptions of the civil rights movement. Indeed, the moderates' perceptions of school controversies, reflected in the New York Times and Herald Tribune, have been the ones that have shaped public opinion more than any others in recent years.

The judgment of PEA officials that civil rights militants were "extremists" served to block communications and further polarize these interests. The civil rights leader PEA officials felt most in sympathy with was Roy Wilkins, especially in his public statements condemning boycotts, mass busing, and adventurist demonstrators, and his support of such plans as the Gross Blueprint. Ironically, PEA officials were dismayed at the polarization among groups on the desegregation controversy, yet they did nothing to try to end it. Their position was as hardened and inflexible during the heat of the controversy as were those of civil rights and neighborhood school groups.

All PEA positions related to some of its basic values and traditions. One of the most important of such traditions was PEA's reformist conception of the difference it saw between its "public interest" position, arrived at from a "professional" assessment of problems, and the "private interest" position, presumably held by civil rights groups whose main concern was with the particularistic rights and needs of minority group children. PEA officials thus had a tendency to see their own positions and those of Board professionals as "above politics." They overlooked the fact that Board members and officials reflected and responded to numerous political pressures, including many from within the system that favored a maintenance of tradition.

The fallacy in PEA's view was its assumption that apolitical "experts" and "professionals" at the Board and in moderate organizations like its own took positions that transcended the particularism and provincialism of special interest groups. But politics and special interests can never be wished away through such a "technocratic" or "good government" ideology. PEA, though claiming to represent the interests of the entire populace, was in fact responsive to a middle-class, individualistic point of view, following the lead of UPA and its local parent associations.

Further, it can be argued that the history of PEA's efforts in public education belies its claims to be above politics. As Sol Cohen points out in his study, PEA had traditionally tried to keep control of the public schools out of the hands of outside political pressure groups and demagogues-- the clubhouse and political machine of the past, and, at times, an increasingly militant civil rights movement in recent years. He argues convincingly that PEA really meant that "control of the schools was to be lodged in the hands of 'good people' or the 'better element,' the city's educated, cultured, civic-minded community, the old stock Yankee Protestants and the wealthy, assimilated German Jews, or their spokesmen or representatives, the 'experts.'"[13] The issue, then, was not one of keeping all "politics" except its own and that of its associates out of the schools. Cohen reports that after 1930 PEA spent much time cultivating ties with school officials and successfully lodged more and more control of school affairs in the hands of school "experts." This gibed neatly with its own interests, since PEA, more than any other civic group, had established private informal ties with key school officials. Cohen notes: "PEA has become an intimate part of the machinery of educational decision-making in the city... and has established itself as the city's dominant non-governmental group, exclusive of the religious groups, in the public school field."[14]

A significant consequence of PEA's successes in this domain was to increasingly insulate school officials from lay review and controls other than their own and PEA's. Cohen notes: "The consequences have included not only an increase in conventional rationality and competence in the administration of the schools, but the creation of a school 'island of power.' The school bureaucracy, deeply involved in questions of policy and value, has won a peculiar freedom from democratic controls. The two school boards (the Board of Education and the Board of Superintendents) each operate in an environment of low visibility approaching complete privacy."[15] It appears clear, then, that both school officials' insulation from citizen review and the moderates' control in alliance with school experts, are direct -- political -- consequences of PEA pressures over the years.

Recent PEA statements indicate that PEA officials now have an increased awareness of the dangers of Board insulation from the community. They realize that the increasing gulf between the community and the Board, and the diminishing faith of parent groups of all classes and ethnic groups in the system's integrity, are in large part a product of the Board's own doing. They see that the concentration of power in the hands of professionals at the Board, who are responsive mainly to themselves and who have a vested interest in preserving a status quo that is no longer viable, should not be permitted to continue.

If PEA follows through on this important insight, it may play a significant reform role in the future.

PEA's influence, though perhaps not quite as great as that of UPA, is still quite significant. In 1961, it was PEA officials who prevailed on Mayor Wagner to oust the lay Board. They later opted for a committee system for the nomination of Board members in which they played an important role. PEA has also been responsible for the selection of particular Board members. It also effected the ouster at a later time of at least one Board member.

Its power in Albany is even greater than it is in the city. Since Albany will have to be the key arena in which reforms are effected, through needed changes in state education laws that will diminish the current major control of Board professionals, PEA could play a significant role in such efforts.

United Federation of Teachers (UFT)

One organization that has ties with both the civil rights groups and the moderates (as well as with the white liberals) is the United Federation of Teachers. The UFT has been an important progressive force in the New York City school system, having bargained with the Board for many improvements in classroom and teaching conditions--for example, decreased class size, more teacher preparation time, improved salaries and fringe benefits for teachers--that were in the interests both of teachers and pupils. The union has been especially concerned with professionalizing the role of the teacher, giving the teacher more autonomy and responsibility. It continues to work on a long-range program that seeks to concentrate more of the rewards of the system at the classroom teaching level rather than in administration.

The UFT, along with the UPA and PEA, is among the most powerful single organizations in the New York City school struggle. It now represents more than fifty thousand teachers and has begun to organize other categories of school officials as well, most notably guidance counselors and psychologists. There is every likelihood that UFT's power will, if anything, increase over the coming years.

The union's general position on desegregation and ghetto school problems has been one of sympathy and support for many civil rights groups' protests and demands while at the same time maintaining a concern for protecting the hard-won job rights and improved working conditions of teachers. Its positions on particular issues have aligned it sometimes with civil rights groups, often with liberal white organizations, and occasionally with the moderates. The union has close ties with many liberal and civil rights leaders and has, both privately and publicly, supported ghetto parent fights for desegregation, improved services, and increased community participation and control. Yet it has come into direct conflict with militant civil rights groups on some key issues, the most important of which are the mandatory transfer of experienced teachers to ghetto schools, instituting bonus pay and salary increments as an inducement for teachers to transfer to such schools, and the union's actions in the IS 201 controversy.

Despite its sympathies and its support of many ghetto parent causes, within a context of its own organizational and teacher interests, the union is held in low regard by some civil rights leaders. They identify it with the Board as one more enemy that is out to miseducate their children, and see it as a reactionary force within the educational establishment. Some liberal white groups, and some moderate ones as well, hold negative views about the union's role in the civil rights struggle. For example, Senator Robert Kennedy referred to the union in May 1965 as "a new voice of intolerance in the North", when it refused to accept a unilaterally imposed mandatory transfer plan.[16] The union's positions and alliances on these complex issues can only be understood in the context of its evolution, leadership structure, and traditions.

The UFT has been in existence as the exclusive bargaining agent for the teachers since 1961. Prior to that time there were numerous teacher organizations within the New York City school system --organized along divisional, borough, religious, and other lines. One top union official noted that there were 106 different teacher organizations in the system in 1960. Historically, the two main groups were the Teachers Union and the Teachers Guild. The former was founded in 1917, with the Teachers Guild splitting off in 1935 over the issue of the Teachers Union's Communist domination. The anti-Communist Guild group evolved into the UFT in 1961. The Teachers Union went out of existence two years later.

The union's main concern, along with improving the salaries and fringe benefits of teachers, has been to increase the autonomy and power of teachers, both at the local school level and throughout the system. The collective bargaining agreement has attempted to correct what teachers and union leaders refer to as abuses of supervisory authority. The union has attempted to replace a particularistic patronage system in principal-teacher relations with a more universalistic one that gives teachers a number of rights and benefits they never had before, and on a system-wide basis.

The leadership of the UFT has very close alliances with the liberal intellectual community in New York City and nationally. As one top union official noted: "We have grown, not just because we have increased salaries and decreased class size, but because of the endorsement of the professional, liberal, and intellectual community. We are winning the struggle not on narrowly based issues but because of our more general concerns with civil rights, progressive social legislation, and improving public education. We consider ourselves part of a civil rights-liberal coalition."

This commentary on the union's philosophy is by and large an accurate one, though there is a substantial gap between the social outlook of many UFT leaders and that of some of their rank-and-file. A sizable proportion of teachers has a more provincial, middle class, ethnocentric ideology than its leadership, as data on teacher attitudes and expectations about minority group pupils indicate (though some teachers were very supportive of the neighborhood school opposition movement and expressed their sympathies quite openly.)[17] Yet the leadership of the union has generally been able to push the organization toward taking progressive stands on many civil rights and social issues. The union's executive committee, for example, voted 30-2 to press rank-and-file members to endorse its public position supporting the civilian review board. The union gave substantial financial help to civil rights demonstrators in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. Recently, some top union officials have urged that the union take a public position opposing escalation of the war in Vietnam. The UFT is generally, then, a new force for progressivism within the labor movement.

The union's general philosophy on matters of political and social change is one of "coalition politics'," much along the lines of that of such civil rights leaders as Bayard Rustin. Its officials believe strongly in the importance of developing a viable coalition of civil rights and traditional liberal groups (labor movement, intellectuals, clergy) as the most meaningful strategy for dealing with civil rights and poverty problems. Mr. Albert Shanker, the union's president, was an active member in the two Negro-white coalitions of the Intergroup Committee and the Conference for Quality Integrated Education. He was a member of the steering committee of the Conference and showed genuine concern with pushing the desegregation cause.

Indeed, relative to most other professional associations within the Board, the UFT has been fairly progressive on school desegregation and ghetto school issues. Unlike for example, the Council of Supervisory Associations, which played a consistently obstructionist role, the union supported many civil rights boycotts, and it later endorsed the Board's policy statement favoring either a 5-3-4 or a 4-4-4 grade organization to promote more desegregation. It also opposed the PAT-sponsored boycott. As one top union official noted: "We do not claim to qualify for any medals or badges, but we have not been obstructive of most civil rights demands and have in fact tried to smooth the way. We are not a civil rights organization, but we believe strongly in integration and try to promote it."

Yet despite the many cases where the union has been on the side of ghetto parents, the gulf between militant civil rights leaders and the union remains wide. Civil rights leaders harbor deep resentment over the union's positions on the issue of staffing ghetto schools. This issue continues to prevent the two groups working together as much as they might on matters where they clearly have common interests.

The issue that polarized civil rights groups from the union more than any other was the IS 201 struggle. During the heat of the controversy, when the parent boycott was still on, the Board offered to open on a temporary basis a neighboring school, PS 103 (it had been closed the previous June), pending the outcome of negotiations. The IS 201 teachers refused to work at the school, claiming that it had few if any facilities. The parents interpreted this as a move to strengthen the Board's resistance to their demands for a community council and greater participation. (Interestingly, the Board interpreted it as increasing the following and strength of the parents.)

Another IS 201 incident further alienated the parents from the union. The teachers expressed a vote of confidence in principal

Stanley Lisser, after Superintendent Donovan had decided to remove him. Their vote of confidence was not the ultimate factor leading to his being reinstated, but it was a symbolic act that was not lost on the parents. It reinforced their perception of the union as the enemy. When the union released a statement after the pupils went back to school, describing the "major victory for our school system won at Intermediate School 201," this became the last straw for the parents. The union has tried ever since to convince parents that it is as deeply concerned as they are about conditions in ghetto schools, but the gulf between it and many ghetto parent leaders has yet to be completely healed.

An "Educationist" Coalition

One generalization that becomes apparent from this analysis of the positions and alliances of a number of the major moderate and liberal organizations is that there has been a discernible "educationist" coalition among powerful citywide groups, including the UFT. All have close ties to the Board and top city officials and have been able to maneuver privately to forge a kind of "centrist" consensus for limited reform. The most powerful members of the coalition were UPA, PEA, UFT, and CCC.*

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*There are a number of other groups that have been active and generally sympathetic to the civil rights cause in New York City and that would fit the "liberal organization" designation. Space in the present volume does not permit an analysis of the activities of each of these organizations. Of these groups, the Citizens Committee for Children (CCC) probably has been the most active and influential in the desegregation controversy. Among the other groups not discussed are the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, EQUAL, and the Protestant Council. Editor's note.

Members of this informal coalition could be distinguished from civil rights and white parent protest groups by the greater weight they gave to maintaining standards and to technical and administrative problems of efficient implementation. They were watchdogs of the school system and guardians against its bending too readily to demands for reform that were not thought through and planned before they were implemented.

This moderate coalition extended to some moderate elements within such national civil rights organizations as the Urban League and the NAACP, though the militants within each of these civil rights organizations were able to limit their endorsement of the moderates' positions. The coalition represented, then, the middle class consensus point of view that supported limited reform but argued more strongly for an upgrading of services within the existing structure. These organizations were always sensitive about protecting the image and legitimacy of the institution against what they often termed "extremist" attacks, for fear that more white middle class parents would withdraw their children and more teachers and supervisors would opt for positions in the suburbs. They were ably supported by the New York Times (Fred Hechinger and Leonard Buder) through the latter's constant attacks on "extremists" and "instant integrationists." The Times' implicitly negative commentaries on the irresponsibility of civil rights militants--"they are demanding total, instant integration"; "what they want would involve mandatory, long distance busing"--rallied many organizations within this coalition.[18] Hechinger referred to this group of organizations as the "responsible liberals" of the city.

Key officials in these organizations, along with education reporters for the New York Times and Herald-Tribune and key Board of Education officials, formed a highly cohesive and closely knit clique that collectively defined the issues for the wider community, established the upper and lower limits for the Board's policies and plans, and ultimately made the final decisions. A number of observations by inside, informed Board officials and civic leaders suggested the existence of this pattern. (Such cynical comments as "the Board waits for the morning edition of the Times or Herald-Tribune to find out how it is doing," or "a phone call from CCC or UPA can really turn things around at the Board," or "the Board's idea of reaching the public is to call the PEA and announce some program.," are all exaggerated, but they have more than a germ of truth to them.)

The press was an integral part of this moderate coalition. New York Times editorials as well as actual news stories were very much affected, as one Times reporter related, by how the moderates viewed the issue. Though some lay Board members feel that the Times has not done enough to "project" their programs and commitments to the wider community, the newspaper has traditionally taken positions not very different from their own. It has been critical of the professional staff, especially field supervisors, but it has until very recently steered clear of endorsing any major plans for reform. Close, informal relations between moderate leaders and the press reinforce this tendency.

A pattern of interlocking directorates exists within the moderate coalition. Officials in one organization often serve on the board of others. All have been regular attenders and sat on PEA's coordinating committee. And one Board member, Mrs. Rose Shapiro (the chairman, significantly, of the Board's community relations committee), was former president of UPA and chairman of the PEA coordinating committee. She is one of the key Board members to whom many members of this coalition relate.

All these people conduct a somewhat narrowly based dialogue. Some of them try to reach out to ghetto parent groups or national civil rights organizations, but the exchanges are limited. CCC, through Mrs. Trude Lash, has worked with antipoverty groups and community action leaders. UPA, through its program to increase parent participation, is now engaging ghetto parents in school affairs. PEA, through its professional staff and board, has been in communication with ghetto parents from IS 201 and other schools. And the UFT has always had contacts with the civil rights movement and ghetto community. There might be more prospects for reform, despite inevitable differences in point of view, if these contacts could be deepened and institutionalized.

Much more would be needed to achieve reform than simply to increase communications between moderates and protest groups. The Board must expand its contacts and consultative relations to include many parties that have hitherto been nonparticipants in the struggle. Universities, large corporations, the labor movement, city, state, and national politicians, foundations, and research institutions must all be consulted much more than they have been in the past. Otherwise the same narrowly based dialogues will continue, with the balance of power and resources still in the hands of interests that have too much of a personal and organizational stake in maintaining the present system to make the kinds of positive contributions that will be necessary for further reform. These interests still have much to offer, but the circle of participants must be broadened.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT

An analysis of political forces contributing to the Board of Education's inaction on the desegregation issue and its limited reform would be incomplete without reference to its relations with the city administration. Such relations have both a legal and informal aspect. On the legal side, the Board is fiscally dependent on the city administration. The Board's capital budget must be approved by the City Planning Commission, the Board of Estimate, the Site Selection Board, and the mayor. Despite its legal status as a state agency, the Board's budgetary decisions on school construction are subject to review and are sometimes modified by actions of these various city agencies.

Informally, the mayor, as well as many elected and appointed city officials (borough presidents, councilmen, city agency professionals and policymakers) have considerable latitude in influencing school construction and zoning decisions. The ways in which they act on such options affect the nature and degree of educational planning in the city. As one experienced official at the City Planning Commission related cynically: "Somewhere along the line, everybody gets into the act, and they all have different interests and standards."[1] He was bemoaning the well-recognized fact that legal and administrative arrangements and the exercise of informal political influence have limited meaningful planning. While a system of checks and balances is helpful in preventing the concentration of authority and power in the hands of a small number of city officials, New York City's government, like its

its interest group politics, reflects a kind of "pluralism run wild" that prevents many needed innovations and all but precludes any planning.

The Board of Education's relations with city agencies have reflected this condition of stalemated pluralism and can be characterized in terms of a few key patterns. They include: (1) A high degree of Board insulation and autonomy on all matters except school construction and at times even on that, despite the school system's fiscal dependency; (2) limited coordination of Board decisions and projects with those of city agencies, such as those in housing, urban renewal, antipoverty, transportation, and industrial development; (3) during the Wagner administration, the Mayor's unwillingness to "interfere" in Board of Education affairs.[2]

The limited articulation of Board decisions with those of other city agencies has contributed to increased segregation in the schools and to many educational and citywide problems. Such decisions from other agencies as the proliferation of low-income housing projects in ghetto areas, urban renewal programs that spread ghettos across the city, the development of industrial parks in key areas that might just as well and perhaps better be used for educational parks, and the establishment of mass transit lines and bus routes that seriously limit prospects for school consolidation, pupil transfers, and redistricting in some parts of the city, all hamper the implementation of desegregation programs.

Unless there is a much more concerted effort to create a superordinate agency that engages in long-range planning and that has the resources and commitment to implement the housing and school desegregation plans it comes up with, the Board of Education will be somewhat limited in what it alone can do. And it will always have a built-in justification for inaction, pointing to increased segregation in housing and declining numbers of fringe areas as conditions over which on the one hand, it has no control but which, on the other, preclude school desegregation.

The Board of Education, like most other city agencies and institutions, has been most reluctant to "go it alone" in attempting to deal with the segregation problem. The Board claims it needs the support from the mayor and other city agencies. It also claims its officials had pressed for the creation of a superordinate agency in the past, but to little avail. Both claims are valid.

The failure of Mayor Wagner and his administration to set up a superordinate agency to eliminate de facto segregation led to an almost complete absence of long-range, citywide educational planning-- and reflected some traditions, codes, and structural arrangements in New York City government that had prevented meaningful planning in many other spheres as well.

The traditions and codes included the following: A respect for the autonomy and professional expertise of officials in agencies other than one's own; a consequent reluctance to question the decisions and actions of other city agency officials, lest one's own might be similarly questioned; a tendency to support actions of "sister agencies," unless they seemed likely to encroach on one's own autonomy and power, in which case they would be vetoed and discredited; and a preference for ad hoc, behind-the-scenes, informal bargaining in interagency relations, rather than for more formalized procedures of coordination and planning.[3]

These traditions have helped to justify a pattern of fragmentation in city government and of planless drift that has not only prevented even limited solutions to the city's many social problems, but actually made the problems worse. Increasing segregation, deteriorating housing and education, inadequate welfare services, the exodus of business and industry, traffic congestion, air pollution, and a deepening fiscal crisis are difficult enough to handle with the city's limited resources. To have to deal with them through an archaic municipal agency structure makes this an impossible task. New York City may, indeed, have become ungovernable, but due in large part to the kinds of governmental arrangements it had developed prior to the Lindsay administration.

Since the insulation of the Board of Education from other agencies and the limited educational planning that followed are just a special case then of a more general pattern in New York City government, the latter bears brief discussion.

This general pattern of increased fragmentation among and proliferation of various city agencies has been due in large part to changes in New York City's population, to increased social problems, and to the need for vastly expanded and improved services. As the scale and complexity of the city's problems increased in the pstwar years, so too did the development and expansion of various city agencies to deal with them. These agencies were specialized and segmented, and each had a separate coterie of professionals.

A process of challenge and response was thus set up that may have hastened rather than retarded the deterioration in quality of city services. One of the key contributing factors to such a deterioration was the tendency of civil service personnel, administrators, and technicians in particular agencies to view problems in terms of their own "specialist" concerns. The city gradually experienced the coming to power of increasing numbers of technicians, gathered together in sequestered power centers. The individual groups intended to insulate themselves from one another and from outside interest group pressures, much as Board of Education officials did, under the aegis of their "professionalist" ideology that only they, the "experts," should be empowered to make decisions that were of an increasingly technical nature.

Yet the technicians were all engaged in their own politics, even as they objected to the politics of various civic groups which were asking for increased services. The technicians pressed for more autonomy, both from civic groups and from other city officials. This resulted in a degree of chaos and planlessness that by the mid-1960's had reached unprecedented heights in New York City.[4]

There was a basic contradiction in this process of governmental accomodation to the increased magnitude of the city's social problems.

As the problems became more interrelated and interdependent, New York City government became more fragmented. This is perhaps the nub of the so-called "crisis" in government that New York City --as well as many other cities-- has faced. The very social forces (size, complexity, new low income minority group populations, increased social problems) that created a need for more consolidated approaches to urban development and revitalization through centralized, citywide planning had, instead, generated the exact opposite-- namely, the proliferation of autonomous, specialized agencies, each creating and responding to conditions no one of them can control. The process was perpetuated by the codes of agency autonomy, nonintervention by sister agencies, and preference for ad hoc, informal interagency relations.

These administrative pathologies may well have reached their most acute stage in the public education field. The Board of Education, perhaps more than any other single agency, maintained a posture of insulation from the rest of the city --both from other agencies and from the populace. When other agency officials or citizen groups protested against Board policies or made requests to meet with Board officials to work out such controversial problems as the school desegregation one, they were often met with the response that the Board was an autonomous state agency and could not allow outside political interference in matters of educational policymaking.

The Mayor

It should be apparent that the mayor of New York is a key figure in the city's educational politics. Mayor Wagner refused to become involved in most school controversies, as I have mentioned. The most important consequence of his limited involvement was that it strengthened the power of inside professionals at the Board. The fact that he received an award from the Public Education Association, after the completion of his three terms of office, for contributing so much to the cause of professionalism and excellence in the city school system, only attests to the strength of civic group support for Wagner's position. A coalition of "educationist" oriented good government groups --for example, Public Education Association, United Parents Citizens Budget Commission, City Clubs -- as well as school professionals and some politicians, reinforced Wagner's desire to steer clear of involvement in public education controversies.

One of the only ways to effect needed innovation and reform in the New York City school system would be for Mayor Lindsay to intervene very actively in school affairs. The levers that Lindsay would need are a staff with both professional and political legitimacy and strong community support. As the Mayor of a city whose school system is fiscally dependent on the city administration and which spends more than 20 per cent of the city's budget, he has every right and is in fact obligated to evaluate how the Board spends its money. Board members and school professionals may continue to protest that the school system is an autonomous, state agency, but the mayor has control and a final say about how effectively they are functioning. At the same time, he can gather together a group of competent professionals to monitor the Board's programs.

The lay Board has been unable to do this, abdicating power to school professionals who have become increasingly responsive only to themselves. For Mayor Lindsay to do so, with the help of his own professional staff, would counter the power of school professionals for the first time in many decades.

There is no other wedge into the system. The thirty-odd local school boards are powerless, and the central board has limited power vis-a-vis its professional staff for all the reasons I have outlined. The Board thus functions as a closed system, and the only hope for innovation is through the entry of outside parties.

There are a number of possible benefits in such outside intervention by the Mayor. One is to effect more professional and lay review and control over the school system's operations --which would serve to counter the power of inside school professionals whose programs, procedures, and codes may well have become inefficient and outdated. A second is to effect more long-range planning by forcing greater coordination between the Board's projects and those of other city agencies.

Specifically, there are many actions the Mayor and his staff might undertake. One would be to keep pressing the Board to institute new budgetary procedures --preventing it from having the luxury of receiving lump-sum monies, dividing them up without extended public review, making continuous changes, and then never giving any accounting as to how the funds were spent. The Mayor's staff might help develop and formulate many of the specifics of the budget, based on evaluations of past programs. They might also keep in close contact with those outside institutions that do the evaluations.

Another activity the mayor might well engage in would be to participate in the setting up of some decentralized demonstration schools, bringing in business, university, and civic organizations as coparticipants. Such schools might be administered in a manner that kept them as autonomous of the bureaucratic structure of the system as possible.

In sum, the problems of public education in New York City cannot be considered in isolation from its political and governmental structure. Demands of various interest groups as well as the operations of other city agencies play an important role in shaping the nature of public education problems and controversies as well as in shaping the solutions and nonsolutions that get worked out.

The theme I have stressed is that the Board must be integrated into the workings of the city. It must not be allowed to continue functioning in the insulated, autonomous, and self-contained way it has in the past. A new set of social controls must be instituted, making the Board more responsive to local conditions and community demands and more integrated with other city agencies. Both these developements can only come about through the active intervention of the mayor, advisedly in collaboration with state officials (the Board of Regents, the State Education Department, the governor, and the legislature.) The mayor must be the catalytic agent, since he is much more informed about local conditions and community needs than state officials, and since he has the powers of budgetary review.

There are many possible political costs for the mayor in such involvement, and Mayor Wagner recognized them all. Some civic groups, school professionals, and civil service personnel from other agencies would object quite strenuously. Many of these groups are part of "an old coalition" and would quite correctly interpret greater involvement by the mayor in school matters as a threat to their power. Officials in other city agencies might well object for fear that their agency would be next in the mayor's campaign to "clean house" and "break with the old." Such civic groups as PEA and UPA would object for many of the same reasons. They help run the school system and enjoy the influence and prestige that go with this position. All these interests might well portray the mayor as intruding in a czar-like political way in decisions that should better be left up to school professionals. They might well compare him with the machine politicians of the past, and suggest that he is setting back the school system and the city with his unwanted and unwarranted interference in public education.

In addition, the mayor might run a risk of appearing to be oriented too much to the demands of a single segment of the population. Most public education controversies in New York City have been sparked by civil rights groups, and too much intervention on his part in school affairs might be interpreted as reflecting his concern with minority population interests alone. Since all taxpayers have a stake in the school system, however, and suffer from its malfunctioning, the mayor might not have too much difficulty in justifying his role to many civic and parent groups throughout the city.

Finally, the mayor would run a risk if he intervened in school affairs before enough pressure and support to do so had built up from community groups. It is not clear how much pressure and support there is at the present time even though it may be increasing. Furthermore, there are so many different interests and points of view among community groups that the mayor might not find one large coalition favoring any single course of action.

There is another way of looking at this, however. Community groups have become atomized and fragmented in part because of their despair of seeing any improvement. If the mayor were to give some strong indication that he intended to reform the school system, he might well galvanize a coalition among the many community groups, both white and Negro, which have become so dissatisfied with the performance of the public school system. The mayor might be the catalytic agent for a new and more unified interest group politics that in turn would give him ample political justification for what he was doing.

The New Lindsay Thrust

It is apparent that Mayor Lindsay already has reversed the policies of his predecessor by becoming increasingly involved in school matters. He announced his intentions early in his term and has generally kept to them ever since. In April 1966, he shocked school officials by asserting at a meeting of the Public Education Association that the city was not getting a full return on its expenditures for education. He said then that he would insist on a performance school budget. Later, in September 1966, during a controversy over IS 201 in East Harlem, he accused the Board of Education of "clumsy" handling of the dispute with parents and charged that the Board had isolated itself from the public. The Board accused him of intrusion, but Mayor Lindsay said he would not in the future, stay out of school controversies.[5] Later in the fall, the Mayor made reference to Human Relations Commissioner Booth's charge that the Board of Education had discriminated against Negroes and Puerto Ricans in its selection procedures for supervisory positions.

The extent of the Mayor's intervention increased in the spring of 1967. In late March, the state legislature, against the wishes of Commissioner Allen and the Board of Regents, asked Mayor Lindsay to submit a proposal for decentralization that would include a plan for breaking up the New York City school system into five districts. The avowed purpose of such a plan was to give the city an extra $54 million in state aid by assuming that the city's school system, while administered by a single Board of Education, actually constituted in the five boroughs the equivalent of five school districts. School state aid is allocated on a formula, based in part on the real estate valuation in each school district. Districts with a high value of real estate receive less aid than those with a lesser realty value. The Lindsay administration contended that the heavy concentration of high-value real estate in Manhattan inflated the city's overall real estate valuation under the school aid formula, having the effect of cutting down on the amount of school aid the city received as a whole. Commissioner Allen and the Board of Regents were able to defeat the legislature's plan. They argued that such reorganization would, in effect, block the effective decentralization of the schools, hamper efforts at integration across borough lines, and introduce political interference by the borough presidents, who were to appoint three of the members of the borough-level school boards. They claimed further that it would decrease the central Board's flexibility in attempting to solve education problems on a citywide basis. Equally as important, they felt that increased bureaucracy at the borough level would hamper any efforts of the Board to increase citizen involvement and participation in school affairs.[6]

Though the five borough plan was defeated, the legislature's demand that the Mayor formulate a decentralization plan was not, and soon the Mayor appointed a decentralization panel to develop its own plan, independently of whatever plan the Board developed, by December 1. Allen complained that this procedure would make it difficult to "get and hold good people on the board."

The Mayor went further, however, and included a number of specifications of his preliminary decentralization proposals. They included subcontracting out to colleges, universities, foundations, and business certain aspects of the administration of local schools and districts -- for example, staffing, curriculum, budgeting, and community participation. The old, good government coalition immediately arose to protest the Mayor's plans and actions. The UPA sent a telegram to Dr. Allen, saying: "Decentralization is a policy matter, properly the responsibility of the City Board of Education, not the Mayor or the state legislators. It should not be tied to state support."[7] A couple of weeks later, when the Mayor announced his intention to replace the Board's "lump-sum" budget with a "line-by-line" budget, the Public Education Association charged that the action "is a dismal climax to a series of moves to downgrade the New York City Board of Education."

Superintendent Donovan, meanwhile, accused the Mayor of trying to run the schools. He charged specifically that Mayor Lindsay was trying to by-pass the Board of Educatinn to "get more power to control the city's schools."[8] He conceded that the Board's decentralization plan was just a beginning and as yet "doesn't go far enough." But he added, "the Mayor has plans, too, and they go too far." The Mayor answered the charges by suggesting that one could argue the question of the Mayor's right to present his own decentralization plan. He went on to say: "The fact of the matter is that this was the insistence and the condition of the State Legislature, and we'll live up to it."

On April 14, the Mayor took a further step toward greater involvement in school affairs. He tightened city hall's control of school funds by demanding that the Board change over to a "line-by-line" budget. This meant that the Board could not shift funds across functions --for example, from staffing to construction-- without getting prior city hall approval. The reaction was immediate and as expected. Board President Lloyd Garrison complained about the loss of Board flexibility. As he said: "Lump-sum budgets enable the board to shift amounts from one function to another with relative flexibility and expedition. In the past, such shifting of funds under the line-by-line budget was a time-consuming process, both for the board and the budget officials, and we regret the reversion to it." Dr. Frederick C. McLaughlin, director of the PEA, urged the Board to "resist every attempt to substitute political guesswork for educational judgment in the formulation of policy for the public schools." [9]

Mindful of the strength of civic and governmental groups which were opposed to his moves to exert greater influence over Board of Education decisions, the Mayor attempted to allay fears of these groups in a major speech before the Public Education Association's coordinating committee on April 28. He promised school autonomy and defended his action in abandoning the practice of granting lump-sum budget allocations to the Board, asserting that his proposed change to a "program" budget would improve fiscal accountability while preserving the administrative flexibility of the school Board. He said that the Board would still have the freedom to shift funds within each of the eight basic programs or categories that make up most of the school budget, though shifts from one program to another, such as from construction to instruction, would have to be approved by City Hall, he noted. He asserted, however, that the change would not return the school Board to the pre-1962 line-by-line type of budget, where funds were earmarked for specific purposes. [10]

Later developments reinforced the fears of the groups that wanted to keep "city hall out of Board affairs". On May 1, Lindsay appointed

Mr. David S. Seeley, assistant commissioner for Equal Rducational Opportunity in the United States Office of Education, as his chief policy adviser on educational matters. Seeley was directly responsible to Mitchell Sviridoff, commissioner of the Human Resources Administration, a city agency that oversees about a fourth of the federally supported prekindergarten programs operating in the poverty areas of the city. As a New York Times report noted: "There is some fear among education officials that the administration may attempt to widen its authority to include the remaining programs now run by the school system."[11]

As of this writing (summer, 1967), the Mayor has continued his rather steady course of public criticism of Board procedures. He disclosed on May 24 that he had asked the city's budget director to look into the Board of Education's spending practices with a view to obtaining a better return. He said in a press interview that he was "in the dark" about the value of many of the programs and services that make up the proposed $1.2 billion school expense budget for 1967-68. He described the school system's traditional budget procedures as "archaic" and asserted: "There is a tendency, whenever someone else gives you the money, to become sloppy in your budget practices." He said his goal was an improved budgeting procedure for the city as a whole that would make it possible to analyze whether specific objectives were being achieved. His purpose in the school budget changes, the Mayor said, was to obtain "greater productivity" --to make certain that every school dollar was spent with maximum effectiveness. He reiterated that the city schools spent far more on the education of each pupil than other school systems did. He said it was only natural to ask whether the money was being spent well.[12]

Several issues are involved in this emerging confrontation between the Mayor and the Board. A first is that he sees administrative and political decentralization as a major strategy for school reform and has pushed to have his own voice in the formulation of decentralization plans for consideration by state officials. His concerns are that the school bureaucracy needs to be rationalized and made more efficient, that it must become much more responsive to the needs of the citizenry and the unique conditions of particular local areas, and that he, as Mayor, has a direct responsibility to participate in educational decision-making to ensure that decentralization in fact takes place. The Board is in agreement with him that some kinds of decentralization are necessary, even though many school officials would prefer the status quo. However, the Board does not subscribe to nearly as much decentralization as the Mayor does, nor does it feel that he has any legal right to participate in the formulation of decentralization plans.

A related issue is the Mayor's strong conviction, supported by recent studies on the Board s budget and much current thought regarding municipal agency budgeting, that the Board must abandon its lump-sum budget and convert to what is now referred to as a planned program budgeting system. He has become convinced that the school system is run in an inefficient manner and that its own "internal politics" rather than professionalism determines how its programs are planned and how its monies are spent. The Board is also moving ahead on new budgetary programs along the lines he has suggested. Some Board members feel that they have developed these programs on their own initiative, just as they have their decentralization programs, before the Mayor became involved in such matters.

Perhaps the most basic issues of all in this confrontation pertain to the question of the legal rights that do or do not justify the mayor's involvement and to the fact that his increased involvement does mean greater city hall control. There is some ambiguity in the relations of the mayor to the Board. Under the law, the school system is regarded as an autonomous arm of the state. The Board of Education is answerable to the state education commissioner and the Board of Regents. On the other hand, the mayor does appoint the nine unsalaried members of the lay Board, and in addition, more than 60 per cent of the Board's money comes from the city. The mayor thus has an obligation to the city's taxpayers that the money be spent well. Looked at another way, the Board's $1.2 billion budget accounts for more than 20 per cent of the total city budget. And since school programs relate so directly to other city functions and problems --welfare, employment, economic development, delinquency, crime, race and ethnic relations, urban renewal, and community development-- it has become increasingly difficult for the mayor not to become involved. As Fred Hechinger of the New York Times notes: "With the school now at the center of all social goals --from urban renewal to integration, from the battle against poverty to the creation of a manpower pool for a changing labor market --educational policy holds the key to a city's future. For a Mayor, the success or failure of the schools thus becomes a matter of his own political life and death. The danger under present conditions is that the traditional independence of the schools is subtly turning insulation against political interference into isolation from political power."[13]

This struggle between the Mayor and the Board will undoubtedly go on for the remainder of his term. I believe that the weight of the evidence presented in this study --on the bureaucratic pathologies of the New York City Board of Education and on the powerlessness of the lay Board and superintendent as well as many community groups to effect change --more than justifies the course the Mayor is now taking. Though such a strategy on the Mayor's part obviously entails many potential political risks there may also be benefits --to the city as a whole, and to his own electoral strength within the city and his future political career.

The Need for a New Coalition

Lindsay's intervention would have a greater likelihood of success if he had the backing of State Education Commissioner James Allen and his staff. There is certainly a possibility of their joining forces, since Allen has viewed the increasing unrest in the minority group community and the continued signs of inadequate school services with much concern.

Allen's role historically, however, has not been that significant.[14] On the desegregation issue, for example, he was not able to effect much innovation. The two times he did intervene directly, in his request of May 1963 for a desegregation plan and in the Allen Commission Report of 1964, the Board did not follow up and develop programs along the lines suggested. Even when he became more directly involved, Allen has been subjected to political pressures that prevented him from influencing the Board.

I have already referred to the coalition of upstate and big city neighborhood school legislators which has encouraged Allen to move slowly in enforcing the implementation of desegregation plans in New York City, lest one of the many neighborhood school bills it has brought to the legislature get passed. Thus far, all these bills have been kept in committee, but their very existence and the active efforts of this neighborhood school coalition to pass them have made it clear to the commissioner that if he moves too rapidly there may be a strong reaction in opposition to his involvement. Allen has also been subject to pressures from some of the governor's staff not to intervene in New York City school affairs. Allen's fear has been that the governor and state legislature might undermine the authority and legitimacy of his office if his actions were too "out of line" with their interests and with their conceptions of what was politically acceptable.

His own staff, meanwhile, with the exception of a handful of top officials and close associates, were not that committed to pressing for any more desegregation than might be effected without any adverse reactions from school officials and citizen groups. The usual definitions of how much state pressure and influence were likely to be acceptable locally, without creating a strong backlash, were narrowly defined. Allen and his staff were generally reluctant to move ahead too rapidly. The adherence of many of them to the "home rule" doctrine, viewed by many civil rights groups as public education's equivalent to states' rights, had prevented more intervention and state pressure on local boards and superintendents. Individually, Allen is one of the most reform and innovation-minded state education commissioners in the nation. His views on desegregation especially have been unusually progressive and far-reaching. Yet, the political pressures and constraints on him have been so great that he has hesitated to use all the powers of his office for fear that he would undermine himself, his position, and his agency by the backlash he would create.

Yet there is at least a partial way out for him, and that is to become aligned with reform-minded mayors like Lindsay and work with them to create new, change-oriented coalitions. The desegregation issue one on which Allen intervened more than any other state education commissioner and yet stumbled just the same, has come and gone. Most community groups, however, continue to bemoan the condition of the school system. Many feel the school system is not educating the children. Even more important, they feel the Board is not responsive to community needs and complaints. One can argue that Allen has an obligation as well as an opportunity to intervene in such a situation.

Public education controversies in New York City where the mayor and state education department played no major role have been a classic case of what conflict theorists refer to as a "No Win" game. All contestants, including the inside professionals at the Board, are losing. The professionals are losing because, successful as they have been in holding the line against continued citizen demands and protests, it is clear that the community will prevail in the long run. The community is losing now because children are getting an inferior education. Trends in reading scores and dropout rates indicate that.

If the city's diverse populations can be mobilized around the slogans of upgrading quality and making the school system more accountable and responsive to its clients, they can force Lindsay and Allen's intervention and raise prospects for reform in such fields as decentralization, educational parks, personnel and examination procedures, curriculum development, use of indigenous populations in the schools, and teacher training. None of those innovations is possible, however, without the development of a large enough coalition to force Lindsay and Allen to intervene. But such a coalition may never develop unless top city and state officials are willing to take some risks of intervening "before the fact" to show their commitments and goodwill.

Chapter Eight

SOME CONCLUSIONS

I stated in Chapter One that the inactions of the New York City Board of Education had national implications. In this chapter, I will examine some of those implications and will suggest some policy recommendations for school administrators, civic groups, and other public officials that seem to emerge from the New York experience. Many of the recommendations might just as well have come out of a study of any other big school system, though I believe they become most readily apparent from a careful review of public education controversies in New York City.

Indeed, the New York City school system has often been used as a model for the systems in other cities and is thus a strategic case to examine. It is generally farther along in the formulation of desegregation and compensatory education plans than any other large Northern city. It has long been a center of cosmopolitan values, of progressive politics, and of innovation in many fields. Furthermore, virtually all public education controversies that have been played out around the nation have taken place in their most dramatic form in the New York City school system. Boycotts of Negro and white parents over desegregation, demands for more community participation, and teacher strikes or threats of strikes are all commonplace here. In the words of one cynic, the New York City school system is the nightmare toward which many others are moving.

My main thesis is that meaningful innovation and reform have not taken place in the New York City school system over the last decade and perhaps even longer. This has been the case, despite a heightening of citizen demands for innovation and despite massive demographic and social changes, both within the city and throughout the nation -- which should have evoked a much more accommodative response from the Board than has been forthcoming.[1]

Again, I would like to emphasize that the absence of much innovation and reform is not unique to the New York City school system. It exists in every big city school system and is characteristic of public education as a national institution. The process, however, is easier to discern in New York City where there were more far-reaching ramifications, affecting desegregation, quality, and the intensity of community conflict. The fact that educational innovation and reform did not take place in one of the most cosmopolitan and innovation-minded cities in the nation suggests the enormity of the cultural lag between the procedures, training, codes, traditions, and administrative practices of public education as an institution and the changing society and clienteles it is supposed to serve.

I have suggested a wide range of interrelated conditions that have contributed to the New York Board of Education's inactions and have grouped them here under five general headings: (1) interest group alignments and politics; (2) the administrative structure, codes, and operations of the Board of Education; (3) the structure of New York City government; (4) the reciprocal relations and patterns of influence and communication between and among these three constellations of interests; and (5) a number of situational factors, including demographic and housing patterns, scarcities of funds, school space, and staff, and state education laws.

Interest Group Alignments

A. Politically Ineffective Integrationist Coalition. The absence of innovation on the desegregation issue, by far the most contested one in recent years, was a result in part of a politically ineffective integrationist coalition. The civil rights movement, like so many mass movements at an early stage of development, was unable to achieve any significant degree of unity in New York City. It was, in this regard, much like other racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the city. The lack of unity was accompanied by an inability to mobilize much grass-roots support for desegregation plans. It was also accompanied by the pursuit of a conflict strategy that defined the desegregation issue in narrow self-interest terms, thereby alienating potential white allies and more moderate civil rights organizations, further intensifying the neighborhood school opposition, and giving the Board a justification for inaction.[2]

Leadership classes and divergent loyalties, status affiliations, organizational imperatives, and constituent pressures have quite consistently prevented much united action, except in periods of extreme crisis or extreme clarity as to the Board's intentions and actions. The civil rights movement has been split between militant, locally based, ghetto parent groups and established national organizations. It has also been divided along ethnic, class, and geographic lines. Sometimes there have been factions within the same community. In many instances the divisions were not so much over goals, or even over the appropriate strategy, but rather were reflections of leadership struggles and organizational priorities.

One major factor that contribued to the split was the fact that New York is the headquarters city for all national civil rights organizations. Their boards and large donors are frequently from the "white liberal" New York City community. This group stresses the need for legal and negotiating strategies and for attacking discrimination in housing and employment and voter registration drives. This has resulted in national civil rights organizations taking a more moderate stand on school desegregation in New York City than do many local groups.

Civil rights groups, in turn, have been divided time and again from "white liberal" organizations that have participated only in the most limited way in protest actions and have had considerable difficulty mobilizing much support from their ranks for nonvoluntary desegregation plans. One of the best examples of this failure to secure grassroots support is the American Jewish Congress (not discussed in the present selection), some of whose staff and leadership were in the forefront of the desegregation struggle but who were held back by their Board and even more by a rebellious constituency, in the shape of local AJC chapters, who resented being put on the firing line by their leadership -- and who, in turn, were sometimes part of the white backlash in the city.

Limited grassroots support also hurt the movement. Integrationist groups, unlike the opposition, had a limited mass base. Neighborhood school groups like Parents and Taxpayers were able to build a movement on an already existing foundation of homeowner, taxpayer, and neighborhood improvement groups, while civil rights leaders faced the formidable task of mobilizing a much more atomized population. And they did not have the resources and perhaps foresight to concentrate on the problem.

One result of the limited grassroots mobilization was that Negro parents from ghetto areas expressed themselves at times in public hearings as favoring an upgrading of schools and replacements in their local areas, rather than having their children transferred out. White integrationists had even less grassroots support.

Integrationist leaders and activists were in actuality just a handful of people conducting a liberal monolugue with one another. They were leaders without followers. The Board of Education realized this and formulated its actions accordingly. Meanwhile, it did little or nothing to educate and persuade the community of the benefits of desegregation.

The political stragegy of the civil rights movement also hurt its cause. A strategy of conflict and of morality was often followed, convinced as were civil rights activists of the justice of their cause and of the self-evident benefits to all children of school desegregation. Appeals to the conscience of the white community failed, however, as did attempts to mobilize support around such divisive symbols as racial balance and desegregation. The white community clearly doesn't respond to such appeals. Furthermore, there was little willingness on the part of most civil rights leaders to compromise and modify their publicly stated goals. This was quite understandable, since they had achieved little success in the past through negotiations and compromise. But neither could they win through a more militant, direct action strategy.

B. The Power and Holding Action Strategy of the Moderates. Even though the opposition was well mobilized and integrationist groups only partially and sporadically so, there might well have been more movement, given New York City's progressive traditions, had the city's powerful "moderate" organizations provided some pressure and support for desegregation. But moderate organizations, holding the balance of power on the issue, did little to further the school desegregation cause. In fact, they have failed the cause of educational reform and innovation in New York City on many other issues as well, despite the fact that they developed originally as educational and civic reform organizations.[3]

They were reformers by the standards of the 1920's and '30's, and perhaps even a little later. In terms of the problems and realities of the 1950's and '60's -- desegregation, breaking the insulation and power of school officials -- they were a force for maintaining the status quo. The moderates were part of what I have referred to as an "educationist" coalition, seeking to preserve professionalism by maintaining the autonomy and insulation of school officials from political interference when, in fact, that tactic had the very opposite effect.

The familar historical pattern of vanguard reformers and radicals of one generation becoming the gatekeepers of tradition in the next certainly seems to characterize the position of the moderates in the New York City school crisis.

Obviously, it was the moderates' power and resources, and not just their outlook, that prevented change. They had deliberately beat back civil rights pressures for desegregation, in alliance with the Board of Education. The two main moderate organizations, PEA and UPA, had both become highly politicized and had built up their private access to Board and city officials through years of experience. Both were called on in a "consultative" capacity before public hearings and before the Board decided on its final desegregation plans. Through informal relations with key Board officials, they shared in such decision-making. They represented a pattern of white, middle- and upper-middle-class, predominantly Jewish and Protestant control of the New York City school system. The characterization by one knowledgeable informant of UPA as a "Jewish WASPS" organization is an accurate one. It was a liberal, middle class Jewish population, who had done so much in the 1930's and '40's to force through their PTAs an upgrading of teaching and curriculum and more expenditures for the public schools, who, in turn, ironically became protectors of standards and of the status quo in recent years. They were caught in the ambivalent position of favoring both quality and equality, but of seeing the latter as necessarilu injuring the former.

To speak of a pattern of white middle class control of the New City school system, even though up to 50 per cent of the pupils are from low income Negro and Puerto Rican families, is quite accurate. The reasons for such control relate to the tremendous inequalities in political resources of moderate groups as compared with civil rights organizations. Most integrationist organizations are multipurpose organizations with many commitments and priorities other than school desegregation or public education. Their education staff members are either volunteers or are working on school issues in New York City on a part-time basis.

In sharp contrast, UPA and PEA are primarily concerned with public education matters. Both are affluent enough to have fulltime staff prefessionals who spend all their working hours on these issues. These people are experienced in dealing with the Board, know much about the system's operations, and are especially cognizant of the many strategies that Board officials use when confronted with citizen groups like themselves.

C. The Neighborhood School Coalition. A further set of interests that previously had not been involved in public education issues and had, indeed, been quite apathetic, was the neighborhood school, anti-integration coalition. As school desegregation became an issue, this group emerged as a militantly activist social movement. It represents lower- and lower-middle-class populations recently migrated from central city slums and decaying, transitional areas. They want to keep their new neighborhood "respectable" by preserving uncrowded, "good" schools and safe living conditions. They are often an ethnocentric and highly status conscious second generation, proud of the way they rose from a proletarian existence by their own efforts. Their attitude is that if the Negro had any ambition, he could do the same. Many of these whites are homeowners, afraid that property values might decline if Negroes move into their area. As parents, they are concerned about the upward mobility and occupational achievement of their children which they see as threatened by forced desegregation and, they reason, an accompanying decline in the quality of education.[4]

All these interests predisposed this population to embrace the neighborhood school concept. The group constituted a mass base for resistance to desegregation and has been especially susceptible to demagogic appeals in Queens (Parents and Taxpayers), Brooklyn (Joint Council for Better Education), and the Bronx (Parents and Citizens), all areas of expanding Negro and Puerto Rican populations. It is resentful of the fact that upper-middle-class "white liberals" and civil rights leaders have placed them on the firing line while in many cases sending their own children to private schools.

The power of these neighborhood school groups, even in New York City, is undoubtedly substantial. They have coalesced into an unplanned but highly influential coalition that is linked with many public school officials and a variety of public and private real estate groups, all wedded to the twin goals of maintaining segregated residential areas and neighborhood schools. They have exerted influence over the lay Board, school professionals, the mayor, and many other public officials in the city.

The actions of the neighborhood school coalition are New York City's version of the white backlash, and such a backlash exists, even in one of the supposedly most progressive cities of the nation. Neighborhood school interests have helped bring the Board of Education's limited actions on desegregation to a standstill, and have functioned on a regional and state as well as city level to preserve the neighborhood school. Their paid lobbyists in Albany work continuously to get antibusing legislation enacted.

In sum, there is no strong coalition for change, whereas status quo oriented groups are very powerful. The moderates, to be sure, differ somewhat in outlook from the more strident neighborhood school groups, but the effects of pressures from both are the same. They reinforce the Board's tendency toward inaction.

The Board of Education

If these forces alone have not served to stack the cards against change, there are two others that just about closed out any prospects. One pertains to organizational characteristics and codes within the school system, over and above its commitments to the neighborhood school doctrine.

One of these characteristics is the system's weak leadership. The lay Board has not had the time, energy, resources, or expertise to effectively monitor and evaluate programs and data on which its policies were based. They certainly couldn't review how policies were implemented by the professionals, with the lay Board playing almost no meaningful role in shaping the operations of the system. Yet the superintendent himself had limited power. He was hemmed in by a variety of power blocs at headquarters and in the field. The power had gravitated, then, not just to the professional staff, but to those segments most committed to maintaining the status quo. They could prevent innovations regardless of the preferences of the lay Board, the superintendent, and his lieutenants.[5]

Another key characteristic is the system's over-bureaucratization. Because of its size and geographic spread, and headquarters distrust of field officials, the New York City school system had become, by the late 1950's and '60's, highly centralized and even militaristic. The elaboration of many levels in its administrative hierarchy contributed to poor communications between headquarters and the field.[6] Further, centralization and a principle of "bureaucratic" rather than "collegial" (professional) authority created major schisms between headquarters and the field. This led, in turn, to feelings of distrust and alienation of field personnel toward headquarters and to traditions of field noncompliance with headquarters directives. Advanced policy statements were very rarely implemented, and when they were, they were seriously diluted. There was limited headquarters followthrough to ensure that effective implementation actually took place.

Other aspects of the bureaucratization included much specialization on multiple and sometimes contradictory bases, accompanied in turn by a fragmentation of units.[7] This seriously limited prospects for developing a strong enough coalition for innovation, as groups could veto each other's ideas. In addition, there were many disterted communications and much delay in communication of information, directives, and data between and among divisions and other units, leading to both a minimum of dovetailing and coordination of functions and an inefficient implementation of new ideas. Often, particular divisions did not want to know what others were doing.

Finally, an examination system developed since the 1920's and '30's, has lead to an inordinate amount of "inbreeding" and to the promotion to high headquarters posts of some people with a minimum of daring and innovativeness. These insiders became increasingly insulated from the community or other city agencies, were not subject to lay or outside professional review and controls, and justified their insulation by a "technocratic" mythology that education should be kept separate from "politics." This point of view had contributed to perennial conflicts between the lay Board and superintendent about appropriate spheres of authority.

In sum, an unwieldy bureaucracy and one that had long resisted innovation, was an important factor that prevented desegregation. Powerful, "inbred," professional groups (principals associations, district superintendents, divisional heads) had delayed, watered down, or sabotaged innovation for decades. School desegregation was just the latest of a long series of changes they had resisted.

The lay board's strategy for dealing with desegregation and school-community relations issues reflected these characteristics of the system's structure and further limited prospects for innovation. Their strategy was a mixture (1) of caution, hoping not to alienate the large block of white parents and school officials who were fearful of compulsory desegregation plans or of more ghetto parent participation in local school decisions; (2) of vacillation (as a reflection of cross pressures from civil rights groups, school officials, and white parents), and (3) of ineffective planning and preparation for the policies it finally implemented. Faced with demands from conflicting publics, each asking for services in a situation of perceived scarcity and limited supply, this response could nevertheless have been quite different. The Board's tendency to overestimate the strength and determination of the opposition and its perennial fear of open conflict and of counterattack, especially from the supervisory and headquarters staff, prevented it from exerting stronger leadership in mandating and enforcing the implementation of desegregation plans and other innovations.

At the same time, the Board kept protest groups preoccupied with what turned out to be "side issues" and defensive reactions. By conducting "local experiments," making advanced policy statements, doing studies, giving technical and administrative explanations as to why more changes were not practicable, and employing outside experts, the Board could "look good" to protest groups and the wider community. This gave the Board a lot of time to delay any system-wide planning and implementation. The delay, in turn, contributed to more militant demonstrations and agitation from protest groups, thereby discrediting them to the more moderate and conservative community. And the fact that the Board was so busily engaged in all the actions I have outlined satisfied the powerful moderates that it was doing all it could to deal "responsibly" with the protests for change that it faced. The end result was always the same, namely, no system-wide planning and innovation and a basic failure to unlock a locked-in system that has thus far been able to absorb virtually every major protest that has been made.

The School System

The historical evolution of the New York City school system has been in the seeming direction of eliminating politics from affecting educational decisions. An examination system was developed, raising entry standards and increasing the scientific merit of examinations. The system had an appointed rather than elected lay Board; and the selection of the Board, while still influenced by such political criteria as geographic and religious representation (the 3-3-3 Protestant, Catholic, Jewish quota), was more and more freed from narrow, private interest pressures. Reforms in nominating procedures, effected in 1961, were a further step in this direction. Furthermore, through internal and legal means, the Board's relations with the mayor were structured in such a way as to discourage city hall's interference in school affairs. Mayor Wagner had said many times during his 12 years in office that he was proud of an arrangement that gave the Board of Education and its professionals so much autonomy from city hall, so that they could get on with the main business of education without outside political interference.

Indeed, this pattern of autonomy and insulation of the Board of Education from outside political pressures was supported and actively promoted by a powerful coalition of such educational reform organizations and good government groups as the Public Education Association, United Parents Association, Citizens Union, and the Citizens Budget Commission, as well as by the education profession. Included in the latter category are the State Education Department, Board of Regents, and professional groups inside the Board.

But the autonomy and insulation that this coalition was able to effect did not eliminate "politics" from the Board of Education. It merely substituted one form for another. In many respects, this new form of educational politics has been just as maladaptive for the cause of public education in a racially heterogeneous and rapidly changing urban center as the old politics might have been. It has led to the buildup and solidification of power in the hands of inside school officials who have been more responsive to their own needs than to those of their clients. And they had such a monopoly over the access to knowledge about how the system functioned that it was difficult for outside civic groups or city agencies to challenge their ways of doing things. Had the Board been governed more by patronage and spoils considerations, it would at least have been possible periodically to "sweep the rascals out" by challenging the machine that made questionable Board appointments and decisions possible. Even with the protection of civil service tenure provisions, now recognized as one of the system's albatrosses, such political appointees could be shuffled around and put into positions where they might do less harm to the organization.

It is not that easy to do so in an era of educational politics. After all, who is to make the judgment that the Board's professionals are not acting in accordance with the highest professional standards? Who is qualified to do so? As I have indicated in my discussions, the only civic organizations with the money and staff to do so -- the Public Education Association and the United Parents Association -- have been reluctant to press for major reforms in recent years. They rose to power by cultivating ties with city and Board officials and they are not about to condemn them publicly. Furthermore, the reforms that may be necessary would effect a redistribution of power and bring to the fore new coalitions that might threaten their own power. Finally, they are part of what I have referred to as an "educationist coalition" that has too high a regard for the system's "professionalism" to condemn its workings to any extent.

In short, the distribution of political resources to effect change -- for example, educational expertise, money, staff, and access to highly placed public officials and civic leaders -- is concentrated in the hands of Board professionals and their moderate, civic group allies. They define what is professional and what is not, subject to few outside constraints. If particular segments of the community question the Board's definitions -- for example, on matters of school staffing, curriculum, headquarters appointments, zoning, and construction -- and if they register protest, then they are often defined as obstructionists and as intruding political considerations into professional educational decisions.

When an angry group of parents from IS 201, for example, came to the Board's monthly meeting in June 1966, to protest what they saw as the many broken promises and the poor planning for their school, school officials and moderate leaders denounced their demonstration as "typical of the agitators who would like to take over public education in this city, but we won't let them."[7a] The reference to "we" was to the responsible, professional, and public-regarding groups and interests in the city.

This point of view may represent a fundamental misconception of the realities of educational politics in New York City. School officials are often not that public-regarding. They are more oriented toward furthering their own personal careers and the power and expansion of their units, and toward maintaining traditional procedures, rather than in being responsive to public needs and demands. Regardless of their personal motives and social attitudes about the civil rights movement and lower status minority group populations, they function in a bureaucratic structure that has socialized them to respond more to internal than external pressures. And they are in a position where they do not have to be that accountable to the public. The public does not know how its tax monies are spent, it does not know how the Board goes about making key policy and program decisions, and it hasn't the information (technical and political) to review and evaluate Board programs.

In this analysis, I am referring to an institutional posture rather than to the attitudes of all Board officials. That there are institutional codes and ideologies, enforced formally through state education laws and informally through various professional associations, seems quite clear. I have reviewed many of them at various points throughout the study. That most units and individual officials tend to come together in a collective self and in institutional defense when confronted with outside pressures for reform also seems clear.

There are some imaginative, creative, daring, and highly trained people within the system. Some are located in new units (human relations, central zoning, integration) that were set up in recent years to deal with civil rights problems. Others are in particular bureaus and specialized fields, and there are some at the district superintendent, principal, and teacher level. They may be in a minority, and those that exist may have limited authority and power. The system may well weed them out. (Several school officials suggested in retrospect that events of the McCarthy period served to do just that.)

There are a number of mechanisms within the system for ensuring that innovation-minded people do not have much power. One is to limit their formal authority or merely maintain them in some kind of acting capacity. Another is to remove them from their positions and "kick them upstairs." Still another mechanism often used is to bypass these people in the informal communications channels that exist at headquarters and between it and the field. One top headquarters official, for example, still did not have access to the Board's pairing evaluation, long after a draft had been circulated (and got into my possession), though he played a significant role in developing ideas for the pairings. Many of the more progressive headquarters officials are "social isolates" in the sense that few of the traditional administrators and field superintendents seek them out and many actively avoid them. They often became demoralized as a result.

New York City Grovernment

If power and resources for change in the recent efforts to improve the schools could not be mobilized from the citizenry or from within the school system, one of the only other sources was the mayor and city government. But the fragmentation and pluralism of interest groups in the community and at the Board were paralleled by similar patterns in the political structure of the city.[8] The proliferation in numbers and expansion in size of city agencies, with few mechanisms for interagency coordination, has resulted in drift, a web of bureaucratic entanglements, much buckpassing, and a stifling of citywide educational planning and innovation. On the school desegregation issue, the Board of Education's options were seriously limited by urban renewal programs, the spread of low income housing projects, and the use of desirable sites for industrial rather than educational parks.

The Board and numerous citizen groups have many times recommended the creation of a superordinate agency to coordinate school, housing, urban renewal, poverty, and mass transit projects to create a more integrated, open city. This has never come about. Traditions of agency autonomy, a preference of city officials for a perpetuation of the informal bargaining that characterizes interagency transactions, and especially the refusal of Mayor Wagner to promote it, led to inaction.

Reciprocal Relations of Civic Leaders, Board, and City Officials

The inactions of the Board and the mayor on public education controversies were supported and reinforced through a web of informal relations among a relatively small number of highly influential citizens and public officials that had been built up over many years. The same sprinkling of moderate establishment groups -- PEA, UPA, Citizens Budget Commission, Citizens Union, Men's and Women's City Clubs, and to a much lesser extent the Urban League and NAACP -- which had built up a pattern of privileged access to the Board, the mayor, the press, and other top city officials. All these moderate groups, excluding the Urban League and the NAACP, were members of the screening committee that nominated candidates for the lay Board. They worked closely with the mayor in determining which of the candidates would be selected, and continued such close associations with both the mayor and those candidates who got his approval. To take a couple of examples of how power was exercised: It was a few key officials from these establishment groups who convinced Mayor Wagner to dismiss the old lay Board in 1961 for alleged irregularities in school construction and for interfering with the professional staff in school administration. Later, a coalition of establishment officials and some members of the lay Board prevailed in preventing one progressive Board member from being reappointed.

The press was also involved in this elite coalition. Education reporters from the New York Times and the now defunct Herald-Tribune and World-Telegram tended to get their information on key school decisions and controversies from officials of such organizations as PEA and UPA, as well as from a few Board members with views quite similar to those of PEA and UPA. Press coverage of most controversies was thus shaped and all but determined by these establishment interests. This was much less true of the New York Post, representing a somewhat more progressive outlook, though not in complete sympathy with the civil rights movement on many issues.[9]

The point is that news reporting was slanted according to how events were defined and interpreted by establishment interests. Moderate establishment groups were not pro-PAT, but they were quite anti-civil rights and were, in many cases, sympathetic with the very inbred and entrenched professionals at the Board who had so blocked innovation. The press was thus a key element in the "power structure" and played an important role in shaping public opinion and in shaping the lay Board's reactions to events. Several top headquarters officials suggested that the lay Board's decisions and indecisions were often affected by press reporting and reactions to events.

This is to say, in sum, that an informal power elite of relatively few civic and city officials existed on public education controversies. All had a very similar ideology. The civic leaders claimed to be oriented to reformist, good government ideals, wanting to keep all "politics" (except their own) from intruding in public education decisions. The lay Board and key inside professionals at headquarters felt that they had a similar "public-regarding" rather than narrow self-interest ideology. Both groups jointly defined many civil rights and minority group demands as self-interest ones -- and saw some of them as well-justified. Demands for compensatory educational services in ghetto schools were an example. Yet moderate civic and Board officials did not feel that way about many demands for nonvoluntary desegregation plans and were impatient with those civil rights leaders who continued to press such demands, even in the face of overwhelming opposition.

Only at two points did this small but powerful coalition lose ground during the period of most intense community controversy over desegregation. That was at the time of the civil rights boycotts in early 1964 and to a lesser degree a few months later when Superintendent Gross was meeting privately with civil rights leaders to explore future actions the Board might take on desegregation. When it began to appear that civil rights leaders had influenced Superintendent Gross's decisions on a few minor matters -- a new free choice transfer plan effected in June 1964, and some inconclusive discussions about school construction and desegregation of the junior high schools -- the moderates moved back in. There was actually little need for them to do so, since Gross had already lost what little informal power he might have had. The moderates, in any case, closed off these private discussions and quasi-negotiations, forcing both themselves and PAT into the meetings. That was a key turning point in the desegregation phase of the New York City school struggle, though civil rights groups had already used up much of their potential power before then when they indicated their own internal divisions and inability to mobilize a stronger grassroots following.[10]

At the same time as this small elite of "educationist," educational reformers, PTA's, key Board members, and school officials were in command and able to shape major policy decisions -- through its control over the press, the selection of new Board members, the superintendent, and other top headquarters officials -- there was another complementary pattern in the interest group alignments and the governmental structure of New York City that prevented innovation. That was the pattern of pluralism and fragmentation that together prevented change and educational reform.

Fragmentation and factional politics existed at every turn. Among the numerous interest groups, there were at least three coalitions -- integrationists, moderates, and the neighborhood school opposition. Each, in turn, was divided from within. The geographic spread of the system and the large number of local schools (over eight hundred and fifty) constituted another important basis for fragmentation. Most local schools had PAs or PTAs and each such local parent organization was making separate demands for more services in its school. As long as the Board could keep the community divided into so many conflicting local groups, it had no fear of a strong, community-based coalition confronting it with demands for change.

The same pattern of fragmentation existed within the Board of Education. The Board was composed of a series of separate baronies at headquarters, with little communication among them in the daily operations of the system, and was fragmented both vertically and horizontally. Schisms between the lay Board and the superintendent, across divisions, bureaus, ad hoc units, and special projects, between headquarters and the field, and more generally between levels in the chain of command (teachers vs. principals, principals vs. district superintendents), divided the system into a series of conflicting interest groups. These groups could coalesce at times to block change, as in the Council of Supervisory Associations. Their insulation from one another in the everyday operations of the system further prevented efficient implementation of innovations.

The structure of New York City government, and the relation of the Board to other city agencies, again duplicates the pattern. There is little coordination and consolidation of activities and decisions and hence little meaningful innovation.

The small, informal power elite who actually make the key public education decisions in New York City are an establishment unto themselves and are not themselves that overly innovation-minded. The fact that they have generally supported the insulation and power of the professional staff is to me the key indicator of their antireformist tendencies. In all fairness, they have made some limited attempts at reform, in their drive to decentralize and change examination procedures, to eliminate the Board of Examiners, and to bring in at least a few "outsiders" (like Calvin Gross). However, they have not moved very effectively or expeditiously, despite their resources and power.

The educational and political elite's lack of consistent reformist fervor has, in turn, been reinforced by its own patterns of fragmentation. One proposition indicated by my study is that the greater the pluralism and fragmentation of interest groups and government agencies in a city, the more likely interest groups are to become polarized and then stalemated on such highly contested issues as desegregation and community participation. This is because pluralism and fragmentation frequently result in caution and at times vacillation (weak leadership) from school and city officials, caught as the latter are in a cross pressure situation.[11]

Actually, the relation between fragmentation and weak leadership is a reciprocal one. Each reinforces the other. As city officials fail to put forth clear and unambiguous plans for reform and to press firmly for their implementation, status quo groups become more mobilized, change oriented groups become more polarized from them, they become divided from within between "reformists" and "revolutionaries," the Board still does not act, waiting for the air to clear and for the crystallization of a point of view and consensus, confusion mounts, and a divided community becomes even more so. This process contributed directly to New York City's stalemate on school desegregation.

Meanwhile, community controversy over desegregation and related reform issues periodically becomes so intense that lay Boards and superintendents must be periodically removed. Sometimes they are relieved to go. Since 1954, the New York City school system has had three lay Boards and four superintendents. In each case, the change in top leadership was simply a changing of the guard and nothing more than the equivalent of a palace revolution. The lay Board and superintendent, regardless of personal ideology or politics, and regardless of leadership skills or personality, have been the gatekeepers of tradition. The power in the system has remained in the hands of the inbred professionals who have scarcely been affected by changes in leadership. They have been able to secure the passage of state education laws since the 1920's and 1930's that have made them invulnerable to such changes of the guard.

When they got a new lay Board in 1961, composed of progressive and reform-minded civic leaders, the professionals systematically cut them down. Early attempts at eliminating the Board of Examiners and opening the system up to outsiders were defeated. Later attempts at decentralization and desegregation also failed. Clearly, a change in the composition of the top leadership alone is never going to effect reform in the New York City school system without a number of concomitant changes as well. The inside professionals run the system and their power must be broken by the intervention of the mayer and the State Education Department, acting in concert.

Situational Factors

All the city's public education controversies took place within a context of situational factors that placed some limits on the Board's actions and were used in a number of ways, especially by status quo interests, to justify limited innovation and reform. By situational factors I mean the segregated demographic and housing pattern, the exodus of the white middle class from the city and the public schools, scarcities of money, staff, and building space, and existing state education laws. The Board and various civic establishment groups have continued to use a number of arguments over the last decade, based on a consideration of these factors, against innovation. They have said that the segregated housing pattern and the accelerated decline of fringe areas have prevented school desegregation. They have argued that desegregation would only increase the white middle class exodus. They have maintained that limited money, school space, and staff place inevitable constraints on the amount of desegregation that is possible. If there is no high school space, or no space for four-year middle schools, there can be little immediate desegregation, it is argued. Recently, the Board and moderate groups have argued that any attempted "takeovers" by the community in running some schools will further increase the white middle class exodus. Finally, the Board has always argued that state education laws limit the reforms it can mandate.

All these situational factors do place serious constraints on desegregation and reform. It is increasingly difficult to develop plans for desegregating Harlem, the South Bronx, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Brownsville. Yet much desegregation could be effected if the Board and city officials chose to buck the tide of public opinion and status quo interests and exert strong leadership in this direction.

It appears, however, that they have not and will not and that the desegregation issue, at least as it has been contested in New York City since 1954, is to all intents and purposes a defunct one. Minority group populations and civil rights leaders have actually given up fighting the school desegregation battle as it has been fought before. It isn't that many have lost interest in desegregation. It's just that they see the difficulties in getting desegregation plans implemented at this time.

The controversy over educational innovation and reform in New York City has taken a new turn since the widely publicized IS 201 struggle in September 1966. The major issue has become one of citizen participation and control, rather than racial balance. An encapsulated historical review of New York City's experience suggests what the future is likely to bring.

Historical Overview

The recent struggle for innovation and reform in the New York City school system has gone through a few key phases. The first period was from the 1954 Supreme Court decision to 1960, culminating in massive civil rights protests, boycotts, and strikes and leading to an early but short-lived victory in the form of open enrollment. This was a period of investigation, study, the formation of numerous subcommissions, and the development of far-reaching recommendations for desegregation and an upgrading of quality in ghetto schools. All the recommendations were completed and in the superintendent's hands by

1958, yet were not implemented until the mounting protests. Civil rights groups achieved a partial success in 1960 when open enrollment was enacted. This heralded the first major break-out from the ghetto.

Open enrollment and other similar voluntaristic plans had little effect, however, in increasing desegregation, for all the reasons I mentioned earlier. By 1963, civil rights groups entered a new phase and intensified their demands for nonvoluntary desegregation plans. This second, voluntaristic period thus effectively ended by September 1963, when civil rights leaders demanded citywide, nonvoluntary plans and a time-table for their implementation.

The next period, again one of very limited implementation and Board action, effectively ended in September 1966. The IS 201 controversy marked the end of that phase of the struggle, as civil rights leaders finally came to the realization that they would never be able to effect any more desegregation through demanding that alone. They had seen the Board adopt the Allen Report's suggested 4-4-4 plan as official policy and then not implement it. In the IS 201 case, the Board repeated its old strategy of issuing public relations statements to the effect that it was creating a desegregated school at IS 201 and then never delivered on the promise. The location of the school in fact prohibited its being desegregated, yet the Board had persisted in raising false hopes. By this time the ghetto community had gone beyond the limits of its tolerance for public relations statements and demanded either desegregation or a community takeover and control of the school. The Board's own insulation and arrogant refusal to meet with community leaders finally did it in and by early September 1966, the civil rights movement had entered a new phase.

The most recent stage, highlighted by the creation of a "people's board" and three days of sit-ins at headquarters, flows out of all the events and minority group frustrations of previous stages, but the demands and political strategy of the movement are fundamentally different. They reflect an awareness that the only path to educational reform is a movement that basically attacks the integrity and professionalism of the school system with such a show of grassroots strength that it will force the intervention of Commissioner Allen and Mayor Lindsay. It has become clear to the minority group community, as it has to the neighborhood school supporters and even some moderate, PTA groups, that the professionals in the system don't listen to the community and are not accountable to it. There is general recognition that no significant change will be possible, regardless of what the change might be, without breaking the power of the professional staff and the bureaucracy. The community can never do this alone, however. What it can do is to make such a show of strength as to force Allen and Lindsay to do so. Some members of Lindsay's administration give indications that they are looking for an excuse to intervene on public education controversies.

The moves and countermoves that are likely, if the so-called "people's movement" gets mobilized, seem to me fairly clear. First, the movement itself will crumble unless much more unity is demonstrated than has been in the past and unless some very effective new leadership emerges to unite the many warring factions. Negro-Puerto Rican differences, differences between integrationist and neighborhood control groups, and those between Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Harlem groups will have to be ironed out. There must be acceptance of their diverse needs and goals, yet all within the same confederation or coalition. It is entirely conceivable that such will eventually be the case, as minority group parents finally see how much they have in common, and how consistently the Board has kept them all at bay, rarely responding to their demands and grievances. Yet if a small cadre of leaders takes over and attempts to maintain tight control of the movement as it has in the past, there will be no widespread grassroots support from neighborhood groups and the movement will fail once again.

One of the most basic internal conflicts is between those Negroes and Puerto Ricans who still want to break out of the ghetto and those who want to build a sense of identity and a better life there. Newly emerging black nationalist groups obviously prefer the latter, and they have some power. If this conflict is not submerged in favor of some superordinate goals, the movement will be ineffective.

If new leadership, unity, and strong grassroots support do emerge, this will force Lindsay and Allen's intervention. Lindsay and Allen would have to work in alliance with the lay Board, the superintendent, moderate groups, and grassroots groups to force major reforms within the bureaucracy. It would not be easy to forge such a coalition. If resistance from the lay Board and superintendent is too great, the only way for major reforms to then be effected would be for Mayor Lindsay to dissolve the existing lay Board, get in his own Board which would have to understand that they, too, might have to be sacrificed soon, and have them hire a new superintendent. They might be successful only if they worked themselves out of a job, exerting such strong leadership that they evoked a counter-revolution from the professional staff. It seems most unlikely that Mayor Lindsay would ever take such drastic steps. The fact that he has intervened in public education controversies in such a limited way in his first year in office indicates his awareness of the many problems that such an intervention would entail. He has many other programs and priorities and is concerned about becoming so embroiled with the Board of Education as to possibly hurt the chances of his other programs getting implemented. He is having trouble enough on them as it is.

To continue the fiction, however, if he did intervene he would probably attempt to encourage such changes as the elimination of the present examination system, bringing in top rate outsiders in key supervisory and headquarters positions, reshuffling existing supervisory personnel, updating the budgetary planning and accounting procedures, and working to change all those state education laws that might prevent such reform.

These would be revolutionary changes and would immediately be accompanied by a counter-revolution. The professionals inside the system would not only revolt, but they would attempt to mobilize a large following among civic groups to hold the line against "unwarranted political meddling." Moderate establishment groups would work with the professionals to try to maintain existing state education laws and dilute the mayor's powers to intervene. Professionals from other city agencies might also join forces with Board staff, speculating that shakeups might hit them next.

The PTAs and UPA would be especially active in trying to counter the strength of a people's movement by organizing drives of their own. UPA's preliminary efforts at training ghetto parents in political participation in neighborhood school affairs over the past couple of years were a step in this direction. So were the sessions they had held with minority group parents from all over the city, training them in the technicalities and complexities of the site selection process. But UPA has experienced a falling off in membership in recent years (from an estimated 440,000 to close to 400,000) as groups from the right and left have formed their own parent organizations. A well-directed people's movement would accelerate this falling off in membership.

My prediction of the growth of such a people's movement is based on the increasing gulf between the Board and the ghetto community. This was apparent in the IS 201 case and has become more apparent in succeeding ones. The well-known phenomenon of conflicts feeding on themselves seems to have occurred in recent weeks. Most civil rights leaders had expected that a long succession of IS 201's would be necessary before they could get a movement of any significance underway. As a result of the sit-in of the people's board at headquarters, some stages in the buildup have seemingly been skipped. It seems likely that a people's movement has some possibilities of developing and building up in the coming year, barring major concessions by the Board.

I have engaged in such fictionalizations for purposes of highlighting the roles of various parties to the school struggle in New York City. It should now be quite clear that the forces of reform still have limited strength and resources and may begin to prevail only if drastic realignments of interests take place and if outside parties, hitherto inactive, enter the controversy.

National Implications

The New York City experience has national implications that go beyond just providing hypotheses about conditions for inaction by school administrators and boards of education there. It highlights and dramatizes some shortcomings, maladaptations, and defensive practices of public education as a national institution that have existed for many years. Furthermore, New York City has been a pace setter for other big city school systems, in a negative as well as positive sense. The cause of educational reform, leading to the insulation of school professionals from outside political interference, for example, is generally more advanced in New York City than elsewhere. So, clearly, is the formulation of policy statements and paper plans for desegregation and compensatory education programs. New York City has thus been a model for other cities.

Yet the model has failed, and if it is tried elsewhere it may well fail there too. Paper plans generally have not been implemented. Educational reform has concentrated political power in the hands of inside professionals who have not been responsive and accountable to the community. That is the basis for my suggestion that the New York

City school system has become the "nightmare toward which others may well be evolving." If some of the pathologies of the New York City system do catch on in other big cities, this could further exacerbate racial and ethnic tensions already in existence. As it is, some school systems have already taken cues from the New York City Board of Education's habit of issuing advanced policy statements and plans and then not implementing them. Its "holding action" strategy has been viewed with more than passing interest elsewhere.

One of the main implications of the New York City experience, then, is that it best exemplifies a new form of internal "educational politics" that has evolved recently in big city school systems, replacing the political party, machine, and clubhouse politics. It has had a profound effect on the degree of professionalism within the New York City school system. Indeed, as I have tried to show, under the legitimating cloak of professionalism, a number of institutional patterns which are distinctly nonprofessional have begun to dominate the system's operations.

Bureaucracy and Conflict with the Lower Class

Sociologists and other students of administration tend to regard bureaucracy mainly as an instrument of efficiency and have developed a variety of insights and technologies to improve its workings in that sense. This chapter, and, indeed, the entire study, has analyzed a single bureaucratic organization from another perspective as well, namely, that of how client-centered, civil service bureaucracies perpetuate the powerlessness and limited life chances of the lower class.

As sociologist Gideon Sjoberg and his colleagues point out in their studies of public education in San Antonio, Texas, it is the lower class (in that instance Mexican-Americans) who are least served by such public bureaucracies.[12] The white middle class, though it is also at a disadvantage in a system that insulates itself from clients, at least has the organization, the money, the political experience and strength to make bureaucratic officials somewhat responsive to its demands. And it always has the option and the money to send its children to private schools. The lower class has few of these prospects. That is what much of this study is all about.

The Board's community relations problems are obviously a product of many forces -- the civil rights revolution and the rising expectations of low status Negro and Puerto Rican populations; countervailing fears of the white populations who want to hold on to what they have and fear that if other groups get more educational services, they will get less; and the school system's scarcities of trained staff, facilities, and building space. A basic source of the Board's failure to gain and hold the confidence of the community is clearly the bureaucracy itself. Institutional education, administered by a single, city-wide Board is not working well in New York City. Notwithstanding all the extreme conditions over which the school system has limited control, its own bureaucratic procedures and pathologies have contributed substantially to a deepening sense of alienation and distrust of many community groups.

Their grievances center on what these groups define as the "non-accountability" of the school system toward the community. This charge reflects many years of frustration at having to deal with the school bureaucracy. The school system's limited responsiveness to many of their demands, and its limited progress toward rationalized administration that might improve efficiency and school-community relations were among the prime forces contributing to ghetto parent protest.

There is a developing consensus among social scientists, city, state, and federal officials, and civic groups on a new strategy for reform that may improve educational performance and school-community relations. It involves efforts at pressing for a reallocation of authority and power for educational decision-making so that pupil achievement and accountability to the community are increased, perhaps making it possible in the longer run for some desegregation to take place more readily.

This consensus has not been formulated in a political vacuum. Indeed, a number of recent developments in New York City give every indication that a stalemated and frozen balance of political forces may well be changing. The election of a reform mayor who got much of his electoral support from low income Negro and Puerto Rican populations, Reform Democrats, and a handful of upper-middle and upper-class whites committed to municipal reform; his appointment of numerous urban affairs specialists who share his commitments to municipal reform and to upgrading opportunities for the city's ghetto populations; his increased involvement in public education controversies, accompanied by that of foundations, federal agencies, universities, and large corporations; and a rising tide of organization and protest by community action and parent groups all reflect this change. A new coalition of these groups, growing in part out of the IS 201 struggle, may lead to eventual Board of Education reforms in the next few years. There may well be more fluidity to public education politics in New York City now than there has been for several decades.

On the community side, there are compelling forces contributing to the demands for change. Low income minorities are in the midst of a period of rising expectations. They have experienced years of frustration in trying to deal with school officials. Increasing numbers of parents feel more and more strongly that education is one of the only ways their children can escape an oppressive way of life in the ghetto. And many activists have been busy mobilizing them to protest conditions in the schools. Even what might seem like the most trivial incident to some school officials means much more to people building a movement and to parents increasingly restive about the kind of education their children are receiving. Since the imperatives of building a movement demand that school failures be continually dramatized -- and there are more than enough to dramatize throughout the city -- we have the makings of a deepening and accelerating conflict.

The conflict and the poor quality of education in ghetto schools, however, may not be eased by better instructional methods, early childhood programs, or efforts to change staff attitudes. These efforts may help in a marginal way, but even more important in an all out effort to improve conditions and school-community relations are basic organizational changes in the entire school system. As long as the authority and power structure of the school system remain unchanged, human relations courses and new curriculum and instructional methods may not be that effective. Many teachers, principals, and district superintendents, even when they are well-equipped by training, personal ideology, and interpersonal skills to deal with the mounting demands and social problems they face, are hamstrung by a bureaucratic structure in ways I have already discussed at length.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

1. David Rogers, "Obstacles to School Desegregation in New York City: A Benchmark Case," in Marilyn Gittell, ed., Educating an Urban Population, (New York: Sage, 1967).

1A. Wallace Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City, (New York: Sage, 1960), Chapter 19.

2. New York City Board of Education, Ethnic Distribution of Pupils in the Public Schools of New York City, June 15, 1966, and March 24, 1965.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid, Table IV.

5. The Board gives this interpretation -- so, too, do many white liberals.

6. Jacob Landers, Improving Ethnic Distribution of New York City Pupils, Office of Integration, Board of Education, May 1966.

7. New York State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions, Desegregating the Public Schools of New York City, May 12, 1964, p. 3; reprinted, Integrated Education, August-September 1964.

8. Interviews with civic leaders and school officials.

9. Interviews with officials of the Urban League and the American Jewish Committee.

10. Interviews with some school officials and civil rights leaders who collected data on open enrollment implementation.

11. Landers, op. cit., p. 33 for a discussion of this desegregation technique.

12. Interviews with civil rights leaders.

13. Landers, op. cit., p. 34.

14. City Commission on Human Rights of New York, Study of the Effect of the 1964-1970 School Building Program on Segregation in New York City's Public Schools, March 26, 1964 (mimeographed), p. 3. The main findings and conclusions of the study were released to the press and never publicly refuted by the Board.

15. New York State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions, Desegregating the Public Schools of New York City, op. cit., p. 6.

Chapter Two

1. Eleanor B. Sheldon and Raymond A. Glazier, Pupils and Schools in New York City: A Fact Book (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965), Chapter 2.

2. See the Board's preliminary policy statement, "Decentralization: Statement of Policy, Board of Education of the City of New York," March 30, 1967, to indicate how centralized it is; and Marilyn Gittell, Participants and Participation (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1967).

3. Attendance at the Board's public hearings on the comprehensive high school, May 24, 1967. Statements by EQUAL, the Women's City Club, and the PEA all make this point. Interviews with top school officials confirm it.

4. Interview with influential white civic leader.

5. The Board publishes detailed booklets and directories listing its many programs. While no one such directory describes all these programs, two comprehensive ones are New Programs and Practices, Office of Instruction and Curriculum, 1966 Directory; and Summary of Proposed Programs 1967-68, Title I -- Elementary and Secondary Education Act, August 30, 1967.

6. Interviews with Board members and school professionals.

7. Interviews with people who helped gather the signatures for one Board member.

8. See the letter from Rose Shapiro, a Board member, to the trustees of the PEA, February 1, 1968. She notes: "In a very real sense, members of the Board of Education since 1961 have been selected by the Public Education Association." She goes on to say how closely the Board has worked with the PEA. It should be noted that the PEA has not been in the forefront in developing plans for the social and economic development of the ghetto.

9. Interviews with school officials. Board reports on its committee system.

10. George Strayer and Louis Yavner, Administration of the School System of New York City, October 1951, Chapter 19.

Chapter Two

11. New York University, A Report of Recommendations on the Recruitment, Selection, Appointment, and Promotion of Teachers in the New York City Public Schools, Center for Field Research and School Services, 1966. Giardino's reforms are reviewed in the Staff Bulletin, The Public Schools of New York City, February 20, 1967, p. 1ff.

12. Memo from Superintendent Donovan to Deputy Superintendents, District Superintendents, and Heads of Bureaus, on A Planning-Programming-Budgeting System for the Public Schools of the City of New York, May 1, 1967.

13. Interviews with Board members.

14. Interviews with top city officials.

15. The New York Times, March 1 and 5, 1965; and interviews with school officials.

16. Interviews with Board members.

17. Interviews with school officials.

18. Interview with school officials.

19. Interview with headquarters official.

20. Interview.

21. Interviews with field supervisors. See also Council of Supervisory Associations, "Administrators on School Integration," Integrated Education, June-July 1964, pp. 30-34.

22. Interviews.

Chapter Three

1. New York City Board of Education, Ethnic Distribution of Pupils in the Public Schools of New York City, March 24, 1965; and Department of City Planning Newsletter, October 1962. Based on 1960 Census of Population and Department of Health data.

2. New York City Department of Health, New York City Population Health Survey, 1964, Table I.

3. Seymour Sudman and Norman Bradburn, Psychological Factors in Intergroup Housing, (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center), N11A, May 1966.

4. New York City Department of Health, op. cit., Table III.

5. Ibid., Table V.

6. Ibid., Table VI.

7. Interviews with civic leaders.

8. New York City Board of Education, Special Census of School Population, Bureau of Educational Program Research and Statistics, October 27, 1965.

Chapter Four

1. Allan Blackman, "Planning and the Neighborhood School," *Integrated Education*, August-September, 1964, pp. 49-56.

2. *Ibid*.

3. See, for example, the educational complex memoranda of the Institute for Urban Studies, Teachers College, 1965.

4. City Commission on Human Rights of New York, *Study of the Effect of the 1964-1970 School Building Program on Segregation in New York City Public Schools*, March 26, 1964 (mimeographed). The main findings and conclusions of the study were released to the press and never publicly refuted by the Board.

5. New York State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions, *Desegregating the Public Schools of New York City*, May 12, 1964, p. 28.

6. Bernard E. Donovan, *Implementation of Board Policy on Excellence for the City's Schools*, April 28, 1965, p. 7.

7. See footnote #2, Chapter 1.

8. Allen's edict.

9. *The New York Times*, October 22, 1963.

10. Board of Education policy statement, June 1963.

11. *New York Herald Tribune*, September 11, 1963.

12. Interviews with participants in the controversy.

13. Interviews with civic leaders.

14. *The New York Times*, September 9, 1964.

15. Kurt and Gladys Lang, "Resistance to School Desegregation Among Jews," *Sociological Inquiry*, Winter, 1965; and in same issue, David Rogers and Bert Swanson, "White Citizen Response to the Same Integration Plan: Comparisons of Local School Districts in a Northern City."

16. Interviews with residents in the area.

Chapter Four

17. This outlook is commonly associated with high F (authoritarian) personalities, as first spelled out in detail in Theodore W. Adorno, *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950), pp. 224-241; Seymour M. Lipset describes this outlook among working classes in his *Political Man* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), Chapter 4. See also Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963), Chapters 3, 4, 13, and 14 for an analysis of middle class politics that proved helpful for the one in this paper.

18. Bell, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 69-77 and 260-264.

19. Interview with a West Side Reform Democrat official.

20. Interviews with city and school officials.

21. William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1959), Chapters 1-4.

22. Scott Greer, "Individual Participation in Mass Society," in Roland Young, ed., *Approaches to the Study of Politics* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1958), pp. 329-343.

23. Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London: Kegan Paul, 1940); and Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1932).

24. Observations at a Board hearing on decentralization, June 1965.

25. *New York Herald Tribune*, September 16, 1964.

26. Interviews with civic leaders and school officials.

27. Interviews with Joint Council leaders and PAT officials.

28. Interviews with UPA and civic officials.

29. Interview with a PAT leader in Jackson Heights.

30. For a general sociological discussion on this point, see Robin M. Williams, Jr., *Factors Affecting Reactions to Public School Desegregation*, unpublished paper, p. 51, March 31, 1964.

31. Kornhauser, *op. cit.*

Chapter Four

32. Interviews with civil rights leaders and officials at the City Commission on Human Rights. See also, the Allen Report. Deliberate gerrymandering was common throughout the city.

33. Interviews with school officials.

34. Council of Supervisory Associations, "Administrators on School Integration," Integrated Education, June-July 1964, pp. 30-34.

35. UPA press release, April 20, 1964.

36. This comes from many interviews and observations. See also Kenneth Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), Chapter 6.

37. Several top headquarters officials reported this. The public statements of the various supervisory associations all indicated it. And in several schools where pairings were proposed, teachers and principals openly sided with neighborhood school groups.

38. Interviews with parents and school officials. Many board members acknowledge that the resistance to change and the negative attitudes toward Negro and Puerto Rican pupils are a serious problem.

39. Interview with top PAT officials.

Chapter Five

1. Irving Goldaber, The Treatment by the New York City Board of Education of Problems Affecting the Negro, unpublished doctoral dissertation, (New York University, 1965).
2. Ibid.
3. Interview with headquarters official.
4. Goldaber, op. cit.
5. See David Rogers, "Obstacles to School Desegregation in New York City," in Marilyn Gittell, ed., Educating an Urban Population, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1967).
6. The New York Times, June 19, 1963.
7. Interviews with parents from the area.
8. Interviews with officials from the Commission on Human Rights.
9. Interviews with civil rights leaders.
10. The New York Times, August 28, 1963.
11. The New York Times, December 11, 1963.
12. The New York Times, December 10, 1965.
13. The New York Times, December 28, 1963.
14. The New York Times, December 25, 1963.
15. New York World Telegram and Sun, December 26, 1963.
16. The New York Times editorial, December 27, 1963.
17. New York Herald Tribune, January 7, 1964.
18. The New York Times, February 10, 1964; and February 14, 1964.
19. The New York Times, December 25, 1963.
20. The New York Times, February 14 and 28, 1964; and interviews with civil rights leaders.

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21. Interviews with civic leaders and school officials.

22. Interviews with school officials and civil rights leaders.

23. New York World Telegram and Sun, March 30, 1964.

24. The New York Times, May 29, 1964.

25. New York State Education Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Human Relations and Community Tensions, Desegregating the Public Schools of New York City, May 12, 1964.

26. The New York Times, January 29, 1965.

27. The New York Times, March 3, 1965.

28. Amsterdam News, April 17, 1965.

29. Amsterdam News, April 17, 1965.

30. Implementation of Board Policy on Excellence for the City's Schools, April 28, 1965.

31. Interviews with civil rights leaders and observation at their meetings.

32. Interviews with civil rights leaders.

33. Dorothy S. Jones, "The Issues at I.S. 201: A View from the Parents' Committee," Integrated Education, October-November, 1966, pp. 18-27.

34. The New York Times, December 20, 1966.

35. Speech given by a civil rights leader at a private meeting.

36. Interviews with UPA officials.

37. Interviews with Board members and school professionals.

38. Interviews with several Puerto Rican leaders.

39. Interviews with civil rights leaders and attendance at their private meetings.

Chapter Five

40. Dorothy Jones, op. cit.

41. Interview with a Board member.

42. Interviews with Harlem Parents Committee officials. See also its monthly publication, Views, for a compendium of stories on ghetto schools.

43. Harlem Parents Committee, Harlem Black Paper, 1965.

44. Interviews with civil rights leaders.

45. Interviews with CORE and NAACP officials.

46. Interviews with NAACP officials.

47. Interviews with civil rights officials.

48. Interviews with NAACP officials.

49. Interviews with NAACP officials.

50. The New York Times, June 24, 1965.

51. The New York Times, March 9, 1965.

52. Interview with an NAACP official.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Interviews with Urban League officials.

56. Interview with one Urban League official.

57. Interviews with several civil rights leaders. See also The New York Times, March 12, 1964.

58. Interviews with Urban League officials.

59. Interviews with CORE and other civil rights leaders.

60. Interview with civil rights leader.

61. Interviews with civil rights leaders.

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62. Interview with civil rights leader.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Interviews with civil rights leaders.

68. Interviews with civil rights leaders and observation at their meetings.

69. This was clear from the reaction of whites, especially as seen in the mail received by the Board.

70. Conference for Quality Integrated Education, press release, August 27, 1964.

71. See, for example, the New York Post, January 18, 1967. Interviews with top union officials indicated the scope of these protests, which were conducted throughout the city.

72. Interviews with Irving Levine.

73. Observation at private meetings of civil rights leaders.

Chapter Six

1. Based on estimates made by UPA officials.

2. Interviews with officials of civic groups, civil rights leaders, parents, and school officials.

3. Interviews with school officials and civil rights leaders.

4. See, for example, the letter from Mrs. Florence Flast, president of UPA, to U.S. Education Commissioner Harold Howe II, May 27, 1966, presenting in great detail the favoritism shown by the Board of Education to parochial school pupils in Title I programs.

5. Public Education Association, The Status of the Public School Education of Negro and Puerto Rican Children in New York City, presented to the Board of Education's Commission on Integration, prepared with the assistance of the New York University Research Center for Human Relations, October 1965.

6. Sol Cohen, Progressives and Urban Social Reform (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964).

7. Ibid.

8. 1962 PEA study on vocational and academic high schools, referred to in PEA, Reorganizing Secondary Education in New York City, (Committee on Education, Guidance and Work), October 1963.

9. Ibid., p. 8.

10. Statement of the Public Education Association on the decentralization of authority and responsibility in the New York City school system, March 8, 1967.

11. PEA statement on busing in "Special Report Card," February 1964.

12. Interviews with PEA officials about the Board of Education's budgetary practices.

13. Sol Cohen, op. cit., p. 222.

14. Ibid., p. 225.

15. Ibid.

16. Interviews with union officials.

Chapter Six

17. See, for example, Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965, Chapter 6. Attendance at delegate assembly meetings and interviews with many union officials confirmed this.

18. Interviews with civil rights and white liberal leaders.

Chapter Seven

1. Interview with City Planning Commission official.

2. These generalizations come from interviews with many city officials and some school professionals.

3. From interviews with city officials. See also Wallace Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1959), Chapter XIX.

4. *Ibid.*, Chapter XIX. Interviews with many experienced city officials indicated these trends.

5. The New York Times, April 15, 1967.

6. The New York Times, March 31, 1967

7. The New York Times, April 1, 1967.

8. The New York Times, April 3, 1967.

9. The New York Times, April 14, 1967.

10. The New York Times, April 28, 1967.

11. The New York Times, May 1, 1967.

12. The New York Times, May 25, 1967.

13. The New York Times, April 9, 1967.

14. Interviews with city and state school officials and civic leaders.

Chapter Eight

1. See, for example, George Strayer and Louis Yavner, Administrative Management of the School System of New York City, Volumes I and II, October 1951; Mark Schinnerer, A Report to the New York City Education Department, New York, 1961; and Marilyn Gittell, Participants and Participation (New York: Center for Urban Education, 1967).

2. Chapter Five provides documentation for these points.

3. Chapter Six gives further data on the moderates' caution on many school reform issues.

4. See Chapter Four for further data and analysis.

5. Chapter Two indicates some of the sources and consequences of this pattern of weak leadership, suggesting that it is an institutional and not a personality problem. The structure prevents even the most innovation-minded Board members and superintendents from being effective. Even more disturbing, it shapes their outlook and goals so that they become increasingly pessimistic about the benefits or possibilities of implementation of new ideas.

6. Simon Marcson, The Scientist in American Industry (Princeton: Princeton University, 1960).

7. A detailed discussion of these points about administrative malfunctioning appears in Gresap, McCormick, and Paget, The New York City Board of Education, Organization of The School System, August 1962.

7a. Interview with civil rights leaders.

8. Wallace S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1960), Chapter XIX.

9. The observations on the press come from a qualitative content analysis of education coverage and from interviews with white and Negro leaders.

10. Interviews with school officials and civil rights leaders.

11. For a general discussion of how people tend to respond in cross pressures situations, see Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1964), pp. 422-435.

12. Gideon Sjoberg, Richard A. Brymer, and Buford Farris, "Bureaucracy and Lower Class," Sociology and Social Research, v 50, n 3, April 1966, pp. 325-337.